Ethnicity and Political Behaviour of Nigerians in the 2015 General Elections

Iwok, U. M.

ABSTRACT

Ethnicity is a dominant force which continues to play an important role in determining the political behaviour of nations of the world. In the already pluralized society of Nigeria it is not an exception. The 1959 general elections and other subsequent elections, votes received by standard bearers at the centre had always been influenced by ethnic considerations, an untoward development which had resulted into unprecedented electoral violence. This study anchors on basic theoretical assumptions called group theory. The intellectual roots of this theory lie in the doctrine of pluralism. From the findings of this work, it is discovered that the outcome of the 2015 presidential election was an eloquent manifestation of ethnicity as the ruling party (APC) with a northern candidate received bloc votes from the north and failed completely in the south. This goes to buttress the point raised in the work that ethnicity is a tradition (an inherited pattern of thought or action) of the people.it is therefore concluded that ethnicity cannot in any way be ruled out completely from politics. It rather forms part of the political behaviour. However the case, ethnicity in politics should be handled with moderation. Consequently, there is dare need for national reorientation on the issues of ethnicity as it bothers on the political life of the people.
Keywords: *Ethnicity, political behaviour, general elections*

INTRODUCTION

Every member of a society belongs to one ethnic grouping or another. It is very obvious that one's ethnic group influences the person's life. It influences both the private and public life, religious, political, economic, social and otherwise life of people. According to Hornby (2005), ethnicity is seen as the fact of belonging to a particular race. This implies that being a member of a particular race makes a person duty bound to be regulated by the ethics of the people there. Therefore, ethics forms an integral part of a race or nation. Hornby (2005) says that ethics are moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour. Theories of political behaviour, as an aspect of political science, attempt to quantify and explain the influences that define a person's political views, ideology, and levels of political participation. Broadly speaking, behaviour is political whenever individuals or groups try to influence or escape the influence of others. Political behaviour is the subset of human behaviour that involves politics and powers *(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/...).* According to this source, three basic factors influence the political orientation of people in the long-

Iwok, U. M. *is a Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. E-mail: uduakiwok2016@gmail.com.*

ISSN: 2141-274X

term. These are family, teacher, and peer. These factors are in one way or the other influenced by ethnicity. It could be inferred from here that ethnicity is a tradition (an inherited pattern of thought or action) of the people. Political behaviour refers to the behaviour of man in a social system that gives him shelter, protection configured in terms of power. However, it is not all human behaviour that could be termed political. Political behaviour is that pattern of behaviour, which relates to power in order to increase power, to protect power, to modify power or to use power in advancing the individual or the collectivity from any already given power situation (Onyekpe, 2003). This pattern of behaviour constitutes the universal aims and objectives of the political man. Therefore, the main focus of behavioural movement is the individual and not the institution so far as the analysis of political event is concerned. Essentially, behaviourism focuses on the behaviour of the individual as a political actor within an interest group, a political party or a legislative bod *(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/...)*.

Based on the foregoing, the political behaviour of a person is influenced significantly by the person's ethnic grouping. Acting or doing things in a special way is what can be referred to as behaviour. In the political scenario, the way and manner one political party or politician acts towards fellow politician or party can be termed as political behaviour. It is clear from the above that ethnicity cannot in any way be ruled out completely from politics. It rather forms part of the political behaviour. However the case, ethnicity in politics should be handled with moderation.

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA

The plural nature of nations estimated at between 248 and 274 in Nigeria makes relations all the more complex. In no sphere of the Nigerian polity is ethnicity more visible and more exploited than the jostle for the control of political power at the federal level. Ethnic phenomenon remains ever strong in the polity. It is a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. The demarcation by the communal boundaries creates the tinderbox for ethnicity to manifest in the political life of various ethnic nations in Nigeria.

For these reasons, ethnicity along with its variants, such as ethnic consciousness, ethnic voting behaviour, and ethnic nationalism has always evoked an abiding interest among scholars, politicians, publicist, and social commentators of various backgrounds. The critical departure of this work is that ethnicity determines the pace of voting than class consciousness as adumbrated in the extant literatures. The work has the modest objective to chart the broad outline of the evolution of ethnic consciousness and voting behaviour that brought ethnic parochialism.

In its proper sense, election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organization or group by the vote of its members (Nwolise, 2007). Election is the process of elites selection by the mass of the population in any given political system (Anifowose, 2011). Election provides the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeois nation stake and resolved their claim to power through peaceful

means (Iyayi, 2005). Since the elections in Nigeria are characterized with the contentions of the various ethnic groups, the analysis of this work is anchored on the group theory. The presidential election was fiercely contested between the northern candidate on the platform of All Progressive Congress (APC) and the southern candidate of the platform of the People Democratic Party (PDP). The group alliance between the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic nations defeated the candidate of the PDP from the southern minority. Therefore, Nexus between the ethnicity and political behaviour in Nigeria in the 2015 presidential elections is explained in the light of the group theory.

The political behaviour has been strewn in ethnic bias and violence. By and large, it was expected that the 1993 election was to mark an end to military rule in Nigeria. Surprisingly, the aftermath of the election was wide spread ethnic crises across the entire country. Since independence, Nigerians had contended with military coercion, oppression, and suppression. This, in essence, upheld the view that the democratic experiences in Nigeria had been arranged and supervised by the military usurper (Ayodele and Onu, 2006). To a large extent, the aforementioned military actions had undermined the transitions to democracy in Nigeria. Again, ethnicity became the bane of Nigeria socio-political consequence upon prolonged military rule. Nevertheless, the June 12, 1993 presidential election seems to represent a nation that was to part way from ethnicity. This position could be largely supported by the outcome of the elections, which considered MKO Abiola as having the highest votes in Kano as against his opponent Bashir Tofa who lost out in his State of origin, Kano. This, however, implies that the outcome of the election was a gradual movement away from ethnic nationalism and sentiments. In a short time, Abiola's victory in the northern region was replaced with ethnic violence.

ELECTIONS AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

The history of elections in Nigeria dates back to 1922, when the Clifford constitution was made with limited adults suffrage excluding women, but allowing only men adult Nigerians the right to vote and be voted for (Alumona, 2007). The constitutional framework permitted Nigeria's first competitive election of 1923 in which the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) emerged victorious under Herbert Macaulay as flag bearer and, by extension became the ruling party. The NNDP, through the activities of the Lagos Youth movement (LYM) in1933 manifested ethnicity leading to faction in the party. The Richard constitution of 1946 exacerbated the challenges with the introduction of political pluralism under regional political system in Nigeria. The NNDP metamorphosed into a mega party-the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) and became the mouthpiece of Nigerian people that led to constitutional amendment in 1948 (Alumona, 2007).

Speaking further, he maintains that election results, no doubt reflected the dominant role of ethnicity in Nigerian democratic and partisan politics and the struggle for political power. The emergence of ethnic and regional politics had been nurtured since colonial era with trends and dimensions taking place over time and space. While the NCNC and AG won elections outside their home base, it should be noted that they won only in the minority

ethnic enclaves due to the encouragement of the ethnic agitations in the struggle for political representation and power. Subsequently, in the 1959 general elections, the AG, and NCNC campaigned and carried out ethnic mobilization of their respective ethnic homelands in order to ensure victory at home. They however, carried out vigorous campaigns in the minority ethnic areas outside their ethnic domain in order to break monolithic electoral support of their political parties and widen their political horizon. The NPC confinement of its political activities in the north was based on the total control it had and with enough simple majority to control the legislature.

According to Abbas (2008), the Lytleton constitution of 1954 emerged to recognize political parties with the introduction of party system. This therefore, came along with certain electoral laws and criteria to stand for elective posts. This was the period which began to show dangerous trends in elections. Violence however began when certain individuals were disqualified on the basis of obnoxious colonial electoral violence. It will be recalled that preceding Kano riot of 1953 was electoral violence. The entrenchment of ethnic politics and regionalization in the 1954 general elections into Central Legislative had prominently shown the NCNC, AG and NPC at the forefront and overwhelming majority votes in their favour within their ethnic or regional boundaries (Abbas, 2008 cited in Robert, Aborishade and Carl, 2010).

In 1959 general election, the British rigged the process to plant a pliant political leader who would protect its economic interest on the heels of colonial administration in Nigeria. The development sowed ethnic discord more so over the manipulated 1963/64 population census preparatory to the 1964/65 elections that were massively rigged with falsification of results and intimidation of political opponents. The flawed election process resulted into crisis that led to 30 months civil war (Alumona, 2007).

The first election after the civil war was conducted by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration. Despite the attendant rigging by a combination of the electorate electoral officials, security agents, political party agents and judicial voodoos over the judgment passed by the supreme court on the constitutional interpretation of two third majority elected president elect Alhaji Shehu Shagari in 1979. Under the observed flaws, the 1979 election was adjudged better than its 1964/65 precursor (Oroju, 2014). In the same manner, the 1983 general election took place after the ethnic voting and coloration of the 1979.

The June 12, 1993 was a remarkable day in the history of Nigeria. With the presidential election that was on the way to provide the country with a democratically elected president of Nigeria, Nigerians were anticipatory of the national political transformation; hence it was conceived as a movement to a new era in the annals of Nigeria's political history (Oroju, 2014). As a matter of fact, the June 1993 presidential election was considered as an end to prolonged military rule in Nigeria. It appeared that the 1993 presidential election was an improvement on the previous ethnic voting behaviour of 1964/5 and 1979 general elections, in that the presidential ticket of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) Abiola-Baba-Gana Kingibe was Muslim - Muslim ticket, and they had country wide acceptability during the election.

The Fourth Republic which began in 1999 witness the coming to power of President Obasanjo and his re-elections in 2003 was acclaimed below standard. There was another election in 2011, which was conducted in the heat of politics of power change between the North and South of Nigeria resulting from the death of President Umaru Yar' Adua barely two years in office. The failure of the previous political system was blamed on long military rule, weak democratic institution and process of election. The first military coup, was anchored partly on the disenfranchisement of Nigeria Populace through blatant rigging of elections. The other issue pertains to Nigeria's historical factors, especially the presence of over 350 major and minor ethnic groups that fan the embers of ethno-national sentiments and promote electoral violence, monetize polities, low political accountability, abuse and personalization of power and general sense of apathy in elections, especially women.

Ethnic political identification in Nigeria's electoral process was blame on British colonialism which capitalized on the absence of common political system and non-unifying myth of ancestry to perpetrate obnoxious policies of divide and rule, and application of those policies on traditional institutions (obaship, emirate and republican) and structures of various ethnic groups to sow the seed of distrust, rivalry and lack of cooperation that characterized relations between the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria (Emezi, 1997; Ake, 1991). Bassey and Edet (2005) reason that overvalued premium placed on politics and positions of office because of the resources of the state exacerbate ethnic politics between three unequal regions that were bequeathed Nigeria's political elite by the departing British colonial government and, by extension, institutionalize fraud in electoral process. The colonial masters also drove to the consciousness of the north that whoever controls the election administration can determine elections outcomes. No wonder the electoral body is accused of developing into northern enclave (Orebe, 2013).

Since it is established that the elections of 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 seemed to have been characterized by the predominance of ethnicity; which invariably influence the voting on the altar of ethnicity, this work questions the influence of ethnicity on the voting behaviour of Nigerians with emphasis on the 2015 elections. The persistence and dominance of ethnicity continue to constitute obstacles in the Nigeria politics from the colonial period to the contemporary time. That Nigerians are acutely conscious of their different ethnic identities is too obvious a fact to invite serious debate. It is also an indisputable fact that since the 1950s in particular, ethnic consciousness has increasingly been transformed to the unsavory level of ethnic nationalism.

Ethnic considerations consciously or unconsciously, meditate in far reaching ways inter-personal and inter-group relations among Nigerians (Njoku, 2004). Throughout the development of Nigeria from a colonial territory to a Republic, it has been rare, except for small political conscious elite, for Nigerians to think of themselves first and foremost as Nigerians, rather than Hausa, Yoruba, Tiv, Igbo, Ibibio and so forth (Anifowose, 2011). This makes the political behaviour to be ethnic driven. For some time, the feeling of Nigerian nationalism did develop but as inter-ethnic rivalries and political maneuvers became more intense with approach of self-government, those who called themselves Nigerian nationalists came to behave less as Nigerians than as representatives of their various ethnic groups.

After independence, the lust for power and personal aggrandizement revived the myth of ethnic consciousness and exclusiveness (Anifowose, 2011).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study anchors on one of the basic theoretical assumptions called group theory. The intellectual roots of the group theory lie in the doctrine of pluralism as developed by a number of early twentieth century English writers particularly by John Figgis, F. W Maitland, and G. D. H. Cole. The origin of group theory in its present form goes back to Arthur F. Bentley. But the theory was subsequently forgotten till it was revived in the fifties and sixties by Daniel Truman, Robert Dahl, Grant McConnel, Theoldora J. Lewi and other writers as possible basis of a theory of politics. Group thus as a mass of activity directed by interest, and the social system, which consist of a large number of groups, marks the arena for the interaction of group activity (Varma, 2001).

Truman maintains that group is a collection of individuals which on the basis of one or more shared attitude, makes certain claim upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance or enhancement of forms of behaviour that are implied in the shared attitudes (Varma, 2001). The shared attitudes constitute the interests. A labour group, for example functions in a relationship to other labour groups or employers' organization. It is argued by nation but sub-national communities with substantially different institution, culture and history (Anifowose, 2011). Thus, Morrison and Stephenson (1972) conclude that cultural pluralism increases the likelihood of conflict between members of communal groups in black Africa nations and increases the probability of communal and elite instability in these nations. The group forms the basis of political actions.

For several scores of years, Nigeria has earned an appellation for herself as a showcase of Africa's democracy. Paradoxically, every journey toward such democratic experiment had been laden with violent electoral behaviour even since the colonial days. With the rebirth of African liberalism in the 1990s, violent electoral behaviour returned in a more frightening dimension in all elections. The general elections of 1959, 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively came to test the resolve of the various ethnic groups in the conduct of free and fair election. This work points to the vaulting political ambitions among the various ethnic groups contending to secure the interest of their ethnic groups and nations. In Nigeria, the extant literatures maintained that it has over four hundred ethnic nations, with diverse cultural and political persuasions. The examination of the various national elections is replete with ethnic contradictions leading to marred elections. The 1993 general elections suffered cancellation by the then military junta on the ground of ethnicity. The two major parties, which participated in election, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the National Republican Convention (NRC) were anchored on the anvil of ethnicity. Subsequently, formation of political parties continues to reflect the ethnic character of the colonial days.

ETHNICITY FACTOR IN THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

Salawu (2010) notes that Nigeria has over four hundred ethnic groups belonging to the several religious sects, this makes Nigeria since independence to have been grappling with the problem of ethnicity on one hand, and religious conflict on other hand. This has made conducting the various presidential elections from the 1979 election to the 2015 general elections very difficult. It is gleaned and linked that the cancellation of the 1993 presidential election was on the altar of ethnicity pursued and driven by the President Ibrahim Babangida. Haliru (2012) contends that ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria and its manipulation by the political elite pose a lot of threats to governance and security of Nigeria. The issue of ethnicity and the inability of the state to perform her basic and constitutional duties of maintaining law and order, justice, and providing social services for the people has culminated in the emergence of ethnic militia in several parts of the country such as Odua People's Congress (OPC), Bakasi Boys, Ebesu Boys, Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) and the emergence of the dreaded Boko Haram. He opines further that the emergence of ethnic militias and the deep divides between the various ethnic groups makes religious intolerance more violent and bloody with more devastating effect using the ethnic militias as the executors of the ethno-religious agenda. Salawu (2010) notes that over 40% of the ethno-religious conflicts are credited to the fourth republic.

Haliru (2012) observes that originating within state can largely be traced to potent identity base factors, translating to differences in race, religion, culture, language, and so on with perceived imbalance in the distribution of economic, political and social resources. This is very relevant to the Nigerian situation. For instance, shortly after the annulment of the June 12, Presidential elections, perception of some groups in the federation over the disequilibrium in Nigeria's politics became acute. The Ogoni felt neglected, the oil producing states felt cheated, the northern minorities felt left out, the west felt robbed, the north majorly felt they have only held the titles but real power has been somewhere, the East has always felt oppressed and marginalized. These feelings resulted in the formation of ethnic militias by some of the groups to redress their unhappy positions in the federation, (Agbaje, 2012). It is in response to the cancellation of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election the Odua People's Congress (OPC) was formed. Their activities have been a threat to peace and security in the country. The choice of the presidential candidature of Olusegun Obasanjo on the platform of Peoples Democratic Party (PD) in the February presidential election in 1999 was predicated on placating the agitation of the West arising from the cancellation of the June 12 presidential election won by Chief MKO Abiola.

With reference to Nigeria, there seem to be a divisive interplay of politics, ethnicism and religion, which have consequently given fillip to the rising micro nationalism and militancy of various ethnic and religious movements in a bid to correct perceived form of marginalization, oppression or domination. These basic factors have accounted for the sentiments on the voting behaviour of the ethnic nations in Nigeria. Agbaje (2012) has equally noted that the interplay of ethno-religious problem and politics in Nigeria boils down to perceived or real loss of power by an elite stratum, the quest for political power

among those who won it before, those who lost it and those who want it back. And politicians are known for playing ethnic cards for their selfish political gains. That is inciting their own ethnic groups against their opponent's ethnic group. The violence that trailed the release of the 2011 presidential election in the northern part of Nigeria, the home country of the major presidential candidate, General Buhari (rtd) that lost out in the election buttresses this fact.

Segun (2013) asserts that the predominance of ethnicity in Nigeria has grossly undermined the electoral fortunes in the presidential elections in the country. He notes that violence has marred various elections owing to the overriding influence of ethnicity in the polity. He observes further that ethnicity governs and influences largely the voting pattern of the people and the results are in the form of religious and ethnic wars in the country. The ethnic coloration attached to elections has predisposed election to ethnic violence. The above scenario explains election which is the means of political power acquisition in the democratic setting has been violent ridden most especially in the fourth republic. This is supported by Abbas (2008) who maintains that election period is best described as warfare given the preponderant ethnic bias. He posited that ethnic bias has given rise to high level of insecurity in Nigeria (Robert, Aborishade and Carl, 2010).

HOW PREVIOUS ELECTIONS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY VIOLENCE

Despite the political crises interwoven in ethnic and regional interest at the expense of national development, Nigeria experienced a transition for a military rule to a democratic dispensation. By May 29, 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as a democratically elected president of Nigeria. Notably, this signifies a landmark in the political history of Nigeria. To a large extent, military rule seems obsolete in Nigeria, and political stability was supposedly to be in place. All the same, Nigeria's democratic dispensation was associated with ethnic chauvinism and violence in all directions. This, however, deepened political crises in Nigeria. From historical perspective, the ethnic violence in Nigeria fourth republic is rooted in the perennial ethnic crises in Nigeria's polity. In other words, since independence, Nigerian state was governed along ethnic lines by different political leaders.

Therefore, ethnocentrism, political instability and regional interest could be identified to be at the climax during this period. Indeed, it was within this situation that Nigeria moved to a democratic dispensation. Hence, Nigeria political reformation was within the era of social problems, which frequently resulted into ethnic violence. From this background, it is easy to discern why the fourth republic was occasioned with ethnic violence particularly during general elections, and much of its regionalization approach.

Ikime (2006) observes that ethnic violence during general elections has occasioned the search by Nigerians for the true essence of nation state. In this light, ethnic nationalism become a reality within Nigeria polity, and thus, Nigeria unity is often affected. Be it as it may, the fundamental reason for the spread of ethnic violence in the fourth republic was a consequence of the seeming endless transformation aforementioned, and its attendant polarization of Nigeria with ethnic violence. Oroju (2014) avers that Nigeria was ushered

into a democratic dispensation with an avalanche of ethno-nationalism in form of ethnic violence. It will be recalled that ethnic jingoism has been true reflection of the polarization of Nigeria along ethnic politics prior to independence. In support of this view, the national political crises such as the faceoff between the north on one hand and the East and West, on the other hand in the 1950s over regional share of central legislative seats (Ehimika, 2003) surfaced. In this regard, the fourth republic could not promote the expected national unity; rather, it could be identified as merely an end to the prolonged military rule.

Furthermore, the three major political parties in the fourth republic represented political elitism, ethnocentrism, and regionalism in their outlook and configuration. Obviously, the Alliance for Democracy (AD) was a hallmark of the Yoruba ethnic nationalism within the Nigerian state. On the other hand, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), featured prominently in the northern region (Lugga, 2004). While the People Democratic Party (PDP) could be identified as party formed by political elites from a geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Perhaps, this justifies the party's wide spread in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) largely provided opportunity for ethnicity and regional interest by way of zoning the presidency to a particular region (Oroju, 2004). In this regard, the fourth republic was occasioned by the dynamics of ethnic politics, which could be well observed in the attitudes and conducts of the above mentioned political parties. As a matter of fact, through the political parties, the respective region built the capacity to protect their respective ethnic groups and region as opposed to national interests.

From the foregoing, it is clear that ethnicity is a dominant social and political phenomenon within the Nigerian polity. Agitations for ethnic unity as opposed to national interest gained wider occurrence in the form of ethnic violence during election period. This however, underlies the emergence and formation of ethnic mobilization as against national cohesion and integration. The fourth republic however, signaled the emergence and proliferation of Vigilante groups, ethnic and sectional militia as well as the secessionist and separatist groups (Akinwumi, 2005). Anugwom (2002) observe that ethnic related violence has marred several elections in Nigeria with inception from 1964 general elections. He observes that Nigeria require the national question to be fundamentally addressed in order to give way to full democratization of the polity and electoral success in Nigeria.

ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND PREVIOUS GENERAL ELECTIONS

Uwakwe (2004) argues that it was the tragedy of the Nigeria youth movement that it sooner than later became the crucible for the fission of Nigeria nationalism into various ethnic sub nationalisms and micro nationalisms. Consequent upon the breakdown of NYM and the politics of the various regions prior to 1959 General Elections and ultimately the political independence in 1960, the contest of 1959 General Elections were done by NCNC. AG and NPC were canvassing for votes based on ethnic sentiment and bias on their respective regions forestalling thorough breed of nationalism capable of building a stable nation. At independence, the parliamentary government at the centre was formed by the coalition of NPC and NCNC while the AG was in opposition. The potency of

ethnicity, which sowed the seed of discord among the various ethnic interest groups led to a premature collapse of the first republic in 1966. Robert Aborishade and Carl (2010) argues that within two years of political independence, conflicts had torn apart western ruling coalition, mutual mistrust and distrust arising from the 1963 population census which had annihilated the little hope that was left among the regions, and finally, law and order broke down in the Western Region over election related fraud and violence in 1965. The apparent military take over came on a corrective mission to redress the failures of the civil authority to address nationhood challenges. In a bid to address the ills attendant to Nigerian state at that material time, informed the military over stay in power until 1979, paving way for the 2nd Republic necessitated lifting of the ban on political activities and subsequent formations of political parties in 1978

Similarly, the formations of political parties in 1978, also took the pattern of the First Republic building foundations on ethnic affiliations and primordial attachments. NPN formation was the offshoot of the defunct NPC; UPN was the product of AG and NPP resurrected the ideals of NCNC as the dominant parties that contested the General Elections in 1979. The Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and the People Redemption Party (PRP) became the mere expression and agitation of the minority elites that felt disenchanted and disillusioned in the system. NPN took the centre stage in the politics of 1979 - 1983 while UPN, NPP, PRP and GNPP took their turn in forming government at the state levels. Ethnic sentiment and tribalism swept the 2nd Republic, a sign that fissiparous proclivity has been ingrained in Nigerian politics. This tendency is yet to give chance for genuine party politics to blossom in Nigeria.

Remi and Akinboye (2011) note that in the botched Third Republic 1992 - 1993, the pendulum changed as the country witnessed the emergence of a two party system, following the sudden cancellation of eleven political associations formed by the politicians. In this vein, the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida decreed two political parties into existence namely: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) on its platform, Chief MKO Abiola contested the presidential elections and the National Republican Convention (NRC), with Bashiri Tofa contesting the same election in 1993. Democracy suffered a setback, following the outcome of the election, marred with ethnic sentiment through its cancellation by the military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida; on the ground that the said election was not won by his kinsman. This act threw the nation of Nigeria into impasse (Oroju, 2014).

At the dawn of the Fourth Republic in 1999 ethnicity, tribalism, and electoral fraud appeared an endemic feature of the contemporary Nigeria. Formation of political parties took the previous trajectory of ethnic bias and jaundice. General Abdusalem Abubakar organized the election of 1998/1999 on a multiparty basis and set the motion for democratic participation. PDP, AD and APP contested the first elections in 1999 to usher in the Fourth Republic. The People Democratic Party became the ruling party in 1999 till the 2015 general elections where it was defeated by APC. The character and nature of party politics at the moment in Nigeria continues to reflect the pattern of politics in the previous republics in that the ruling party continues to be repressive in character. Repression in the political system of the Forth Republic has heightened ethnic nationalism and revulsions from very

many ethnic groups agitating for their fundamental human rights, self-determination, and political accommodation in Nigeria. Prominent among these ethnic militias include: Movement for the actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) operating in the East, Movement for the survival of Ogoni (MOSOP), Niger Delta Volunteers Forces (NDVF), Bakasi Self-Determination Front (BSDF), and Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) are dominant in the South-South, Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the West and currently the menace of Boko Haram Sect in the north is threatening the corporate existence of the country. All these agitations and revulsions are by products of failure of good governance and its associated ills in the polity. And as far as there are indexes of failure of good governance, marginalization, patronage and prevalence of spoil system syndrome predominantly in the modern Nigeria politics, ethnic consciousness and ethnic nationalism will keep prevailing over national consciousness and patriotism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In clear terms, it is observed that Nigeria as a nation had been occasioned by ethnic identity and violence issue. Be that as it may, the country experienced a unique political history consequent upon the annulment of the presidential election of June, 1993. The outcomes of the annulment were ethnic crises in the entire country. Certainly, the reasons for these crises were enshrined in the character of the Nigerian state, the prolonged military rule and Hausa-Fulani ethnic hegemony with its large implication of political and economic lopsidedness in the country. Instead of embarking on collective national agenda by these multi-ethnic groups in Nigeria, ethnic nationalism or identity was predominant during the period. However, to build a nation implies, first, that a person's political identity be expanded and, second that a national identity comes to take precedence over the other (Ehimika, 2003). In this regard, Nigeria's various ethnic groups seem opposed to building a true Nigerian nation and as such, a genuine Nigeria leadership had been a mirage. Rather, different ethnic groups built up their perspective around ethnic jingoism, and thus, this era became known for ethnic rivalry, agitations against ethnic suppression and marginalization and a host of other crises.

Identifiably, Nigerian leadership over the years is yet to synchronize with various ethnic groups into having a national identity. Unarguably, the political situation in Nigeria between 1993 and 2003 was characterized by ethnic agenda and regional sentiments by the political leadership. As earlier observed, the June 12, 1993 election further polarized the Nigerian state into ethnic cleavages. Therefore, the period was remarkable for none existence of a true Nigeria nation. Perhaps, the assertion of Obaro Ikime could best describe Nigeria in the midst of these ethnic crises. He asserts that Nigeria is a nation that had continued to grope along without Nigeria (Ikime, 2006). Nigeria continues to trudge on ethnic voting behaviour even up to the present day. This is attested in the presidential elections conducted in the 2015, where voting took after ethnicity. The major two presidential election contenders received more from their own region, the APC won in the northern and western states, the PDP dominated in the old eastern region. This signifies the

no paradigm from the previous election in Nigeria. This implies that ethnic identity of nationality is paramount within the Nigeria State. Therefore, leadership without ethnic sentiments seems to be a mirage within the Nigerian State. Consequently, there is dare need for national re-orientation on the issues of ethnicity as it bothers on the political life of the people. Conclusively, it should be noted that ethnicity cannot in any way be ruled out completely from politics because it forms part of political life or behaviour of the people. However, it should be handled with moderation. It is high time people saw the need to eschew ethnic sentiments on matters of elections because with this ideology in focus, Nigeria is bound to continue voting into power the wrong person who perhaps has nothing to deliver. Also, workshops and seminars on election and electoral processes should be undertaken before and after elections to put both the elected and the electorates on the right perspective of political issues. There is need to build a strong and viable electoral body in the country to oversee elections matters in the country. This could be done by putting someone with integrity at the helm of affairs of the electoral body. All electoral commissioners should be men and women of proven integrity. With such substance put in place, any politician or political party (including incumbent) who dares to influence the electoral process or body to it favour should be made to receive the full weight of the law. Similarly, law(s) stipulating adequate and implementable disciplinary measures to any erring politician or party should be put in place to checkmate the excesses of some political parties and politicians. Sensitive document of the electoral body should be adequately secured. The use of ad hoc staff should be handled with the greatest level of care and scrutiny while regular staff should be given continuous or regular and proper orientation and sensitization on their job. Finally, it is absolutely necessary for everyone in Nigeria to imbibe the culture of complete attitudinal change especially in the area of stimulating ethnic sentiments in times of elections and national issues.

REFERENCES

Akinwunmi, O. (2005). *Ethnicisation of Violence.* In H. A. Saliu (ed) *Nigeria under Democratic Rule 1999 – 2003.* Ibadan: University Press.

Alumona, I. M. (2007). The 2007 General Elections and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of International Politics and Development Studies,* 3 (1), 187 – 186.

Anifowose, R. (2011). *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: the Tiv, Yoruba, and Niger Delta Experience.* Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.

Ake, C. (1991). Rethinking African Democracy. *Journal of Democracy,* 2, 1

Anugwom, E. (2002). Ethnic Conflicts and Democracy in Nigeria: The Marginalisation Question. *Journal of Development in Africa,* 5, 19-28.

Ayodele, J. O. and **Onu, F. O.** (2006). *Democracy and Ethnic Conflicts in Contemporary Nigeria.* In O. Akinwunmi, O. O. Okpeh and J. D. Gwamna (eds) *Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria During the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Markurdi: Aboki Publichers.

Agbaje, I. A. (2012). Ethnic Militia Movement and the Crises of Political order in Post- Military Nigeria. *Kamal-Raj Journal of Social Science,* 13, 3.

Bassey, M. E, and **Edet, T.** (2005). *Ethnicity and Politic in Africa.* In O. O. Okeke (ed) *Issues in African Politics.* Abakaliki: Data Globe Nigeria pp91-113.

ISSN: 2141-274X

Ehimika, A. I. (2003). *A Review of Studies of Dysamalgamation in Nigeria.* In A. R Olaniyan. (ed) *The Amalamation and its Enemies: An Interpretative History of Modern Nigeria*. Ile Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd.

Emezi, C. E. (1997). *Ethnic Foundations of the Nigeria Society.* In C. A Ndoh and C. E. Emezi (eds) *African Politixs.* Owerri: Achugo Publications.

Haliru A. (2012). *Theoretical Perspective on Election.* In R Anifowose and T. Babawale (eds) *General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeia.* Ibadan: Friedrick Ebert Press.

Hornby, A. S. (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (7th edition). London: University Press

Ikime, O. (2006). *History, the Historian and the Nation, the Voice of a Nigeria Historian.* Ibadan: HEBN Publisher PLC.

Iyayi, F. (2005). Elections and Electoral Practices in Nigeria: Dynamics and Implications. *The constitutions,* 5, 2.

Lugga, S. A. (2004). *The Great Province.* Kastina: Lugga Press.

Salawu, D. M. (2010). Democracy and the Challenge of Ethno-Nationalism in Nigeria. Fourth Republic: Interrogating Institutional Mechanics. *Journal of Peace, Conflicts and Development,* 3, 12.

Morrison, D. G. and **Stephrenson, H. W.** (1972). Cultural Pluralism, Modernisation and Conflict: An empirical Analysis of Source of Political Instability in African Nations. *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* 82-103

Ndagi, J. O. (1984). *Essentials of Research Methodology of Nigerian Education.* Ibadan: University Press Ltd.

Njoku N. O. (2004). *From Ethnic Consciousness to Ethnic Nationalism: The Nigerian Consolidation: Perspectives from Nigeria & the United States of America.* Nsukka: Great Ap Express Publishers Ltd.

Nwana, O. C. (1981). *Introduction to Educational Research.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Nwolise, O. B. C. (2007). Elections. *Journal of African Elections,* 6, 2.

Onyekpe, J. G. N. (2003). *Political and political power in Nigeria: Nature, Dynamics and determinants.* In M. Dukor (ed) *Philosophy and Politics: Discourses on values,politic and power in Africa.* Lagos: Malthose Social Science Studies.

Orebe, F. (2013, April 7). What is Professor Jega up to in INEC? *The Nation Newspaper* (Lagos).

Oroju, O. A. (2014). *Ethnicity and insurgence of Ethnic Violence in Nigeria, 1993-2003: An implication of leadership*. In A-M Okolie, A. O Eke and A. A Paul (eds) *Politics and law in Africa: current and Emerging issues.* Abakaliki: Willyrose and Appleaseed Publishing Coy.

Robert, J. M, Aborishade, O. and **Carl, L A** (2010). *Poltics in Nigeria.* In Almond, G A, Bingaham, G, Russel, J. D. and Strom, K. (eds) *Comparative politics Today: A World view.* India: Anubha Press.

Segun, O. (2013). Poverty Reduction and Attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria: problem and prospects. *International Jornalof Politics and Good Governance,* 2 (2), 1-22.

Uwakwe, E. E. (2004). *Nationalism, Sub nationalism & Micro nationalism in Nigeria: A Historical Overview.* In: Onoha J & Okpoko p u (eds) *Ethnic Natiionalism & Democratic consideration: perspective from Nigeria & the United State of America*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Ltd.

Varma, S. P. (2001). *Modern Theory.* New Delhi: Vikas publishing House PVT Ltd.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theories_of_political_behavior. Accessed 9/06/17