

MONEY: REASON FOR POLITICAL EXCLUSIVENESS IN NIGERIA

Basil Amarachi Okonkwo, PhD

*Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka,
Anambra State, Nigeria.
basilonline@gmail.com*

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.17689.19041

Abstract

For generations, Nigeria has faced numerous social, political, and economic challenges. The major cause of these problems is money and political exclusiveness. Today, in Nigeria, money politics, vote buying, godfatherism, I must Win syndrome, Winners take it all mentality, ethnicity and regionalism and share the money syndrome are regular house hold phrases and slogans portraying political exclusiveness in Nigeria. Political exclusiveness has given birth to abject poverty, Violence, poor health facilities, poor education, nepotism, exploitation by corrupt and brutal leaders, executive impunity and rascality. The above mentioned problems hinder Nigeria from encountering and supporting sustainable development. Our leaders begin to show unbridled use of money in politics and insists on turn by..... practice political many opportunities will open for growth and sustainable development. This work therefore suggests that we as Nigerians need to change from political exclusiveness to political inclusiveness to achieve sustainable development which will lead to equal opportunity for all.

Keywords: Money, Nigeria, Godfatherism, Politics

Introduction

It is a well-known fact that money has become the determining factor in Nigerian political space. It is no doubt political process needs funding in order to operate, hence money is a sine qua non for the success of an election. However, the amount of money, the source of the money, and the specific purpose the money serves in electoral activity are important issue to consider. In Nigeria, money serves the purposes of consolidating elite rule and political exclusiveness of the non-elite.

This paper therefore concludes that money is quickly shrinking the political space in the Nigerian democracy and governance. For Nigeria to archive growth and sustainable development, a very big door has to be opened for political inclusiveness.

Money Politics and Vote Buying in Nigeria

It could be seen that money politics has made electoral politics in Nigeria unaffordable and unresponsive to the people. It has therefore become the exclusive reserve of the rich. The implication of this high cost of electoral politics in Nigeria is that it has enabled the power elite to not only exclude the majority of the people from electoral contexts and by extension, positions of power, but also reinforced their grip on power and political leadership.

It is obvious that the political process requires funding in order to operate; therefore, money is a necessary requirement for the success of an election. However, the amount of money, the source of the money, and the specific purpose the money serves in the execution of a campaign or electoral activity are so worrisome. At the Outset, it should be acknowledged that money is needed and is used In all electioneering activities all over the world. One of the quickest means of winning elections is to vote-buy the electoral institutions, which are by law supposedly saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring equity, justice, and transparency at the polls. Thus, elections are not free and fair and results are manipulated to favour losers. Institutional vote-buying breeds official hostilities towards the people who have legitimately won in elections. This is one of the factors responsible for electoral violence in Nigeria. Moneybag politics, the common saying that "he who pays the piper dictates the tune" is applicable to the Nigerian electoral experience.

It has been stated earlier that a great deal of money is needed to execute a political ambition. However, the fundamental issue is what the money is spent on. while, for example, in the United States, the bulk of political money is used on expenses, such as finance rallies, buying of airtime for issue debates, and related purposes, that are clearly accounted for, in Nigeria, the bulk of political money is spent on "logistics and security." Often this label means that the money is used to buy off voters' cards, prosecute thuggery on opponents, engage in double/multiple voting, fix votes, and change results. Oftentimes those involved in these activities are paid off security officials who were supposed to ensure that elections were not only conducted but are fair, free, and conclusive. In most cases, those vested with the responsibilities of conducting a free and fair election (from voting to announcement of results) instead engage in activities, such as denial of voting materials in opponents' areas of strengths, double counting, falsification of results usually

in favour of pre- determined parties or candidates. Election results are declared in voting wards where election materials and officials never got there. These are indices of the role of political investors and 'dirty money' in the electioneering activities. Losing in an election is a major trigger for political violence, especially if the 'investors' and 'agents' did not reap from what they sowed.

Tribalism

Tribalism is one of the things that cause political exclusiveness in Nigeria, Nigeria has more than 250 tribes. The word tribe which has its root from the Latin word "*tribus*", Okike (2000) simply means a family or a race descending progenitor and separated from the rest as the twelve tribes of Israel. The word furthermore denotes a class, division or distinct portion of a people as a political category among the three Koman tribes Okike (2000). A tribe is composed of villages and clans, people with common language and culture, who pursue common interest as one extended family Okike (2000). Tribe and tribalism are not the same. Tribalism has to do with love for one's tribe and the enthusiasm to promote its interest. But the problem begins when the tribal affiliation confronts the political, economic and religious world which breeds negative connotations.

Tribalism is still wearing its ugly face today and even stronger than the pre-colonial era Okike (2000). The pre-colonial era saw inter-tribal wars of supremacy, while today in the 21st Century tribalism manifested more wicked actions against humanity which resulted in violence, crime, wars, injustice, disaster, poverty and social disorder as a result of agitations from different groups, such as; Boko-haram, unknown Gun-men, Herdsmen killings etc.

Political Bias

Political differences and different systems of government have caused untold harm in the Nigeria democracy. Many Nigerians enter into politics with tribal, religious, cultural and economic bias, and as such they can hardly see beyond their selfish aggrandizement.

No government is entirely free from sacred qualities Okike (2000) sacredness does not apply only to theocratic or primitive societies; it applies as well to many modern states Okike (2000). Often the three main varieties of sacred attachments distance people from real political objectives. They include:

1. Primordial attachments to or belief about race, language, and Nationality.
2. Philosophical attachments (the most generalized moral and philosophical idea in which a total synthesis is expressed relating man to his environment and specifying the way of the future.

3. Religious attachments Okike (2000)

Furthermore, these political interests and attachments have created a wider margin in common political interest of the people and do a great harm to political inclusiveness in Nigeria.

Political post in Nigeria have been given with political bias rather than on merits. which party he belongs and what zone does he come from, fill the selection of any political post in Nigeria. For some people, their religion affiliation means more than political association or participation even it is for the good of all Okike (2000).

Godfatherism

There is a difference between a godfather and a benefactor. The latter is one who does something for the other "ex-gratia ". He does not attach strings to the good that he or she extends to the beneficiary, On the other hand, a political godfather gives or keeps with the hope of receiving something in return.

Godfatherism in Nigerian politics has been caused by the fact that the Nigeria political system is absolutely monetized, corrupt, selfish, and filled with fraudsters.

Furthermore, godfatherism flourishes because many Nigerians believe they cannot sell themselves to the political market and be bought by the electorates, and for this reason they take recourse to establish political Lords who have illegal machinery to enthrone anybody even against the will of the people.

Oviasuyi (2009) quoting Ikejiani opines:

that there has been a lot of crisis in Nigeria Politics and Administration- a crises of confidence in our elected officials, a lost of faith in our democratic government and an increasing frustration of government, and more also, an increasing frustration at the irrelevance of individuals vote in our political process. All these crises caused by the unholy alliance of godfatherism.

In Nigeria, money-bags own political parties and deploy them at will. They donate party secretariats and huge funds and in return dominate the party decision process. The independence and supremacy of the party is compromised.

I Must Win Mentality

Politics in an ideal situation is a game. In a game, there must be "winner" and "loser". Therefore, politics is a game that can be lost or won. According to Agundu (2007), it is now a win or die affair, yet it is a reality that an average Nigeria politician has deliberately

refused to be in touch with this inevitable reality that, being a gallant loser or a magnanimous victor is elementary bricks for the foundation on which democracy is built.

I must win mentality in Nigeria breeds political thuggery. Political thuggery has One harm to Nigeria democracy. It is a situation whereby thugs move mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating, and injuring innocent individuals and politicians. In order to win election by all means, elites and politicians recruit unemployed youths into thuggery for selfish interest. Nigerian politics is characterized by rigging, violence and ropes under the manipulation of the few elites to get and maintain political powers by all means.

Winner Takes It All Syndrome

In Nigeria, political parties are desperate to win elections. To contest election In Nigeria, one needs money for logistics but the problem we have in Nigeria is the one that is used negatively. Money is used to induce some actors that is the negative aspect. Otherwise one just need some money to contest for a position in the Nigerian political space; compared to other African countries, we spend too much money politics. Probably we need to renew our laws, because the difference is very clear from what is obtainable from a number of African states. So many African states like Tanzania for example during the campaign, a candidate does not need to print his name on a pen or matchbox and give to somebody. They say you are inducing the electorate which is against their laws.

But if somebody is contesting elections in Nigeria, there will be trailer loads of rice with faces of people who are candidates and they are given to people. You are inducing the electorate and ordinarily our electoral laws supposed to abhor that and if you do that you should be disqualified for contesting that position. According to the formal president of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan winners take all syndrome in politics has made the Nigerian political environment a very tough and dangerous option Ochayi (2021).

Nigerian Leaders and their False Promises

A leader must possess the ability and the will to lead his people. He must be able to induce his subordinates to work with confidence and zeal for a common goal. Leadership is the activity of influencing some people to cooperate towards some desired goals, towards certain values. A leader is a person who guides, conducts, directs and opens the way. The leader draws the led along with him. He goes ahead of them and show them the way to go. The led expects the leader to tell them which road to take when they are in crossroads. What a sincere leader tells his subjects is what he means, what he is convinced about. The good leader points out to the led end in view and also the means to that end. He shows the way and goes the way.

The led see more than they hear. The leader goes the way he shows to the citizen because he is convinced that it is truly the road to the common end and common good in view. But unfortunately, many Nigerian leaders lack this quality. They have one thing in mind but tell the citizens contrary. For example, when General Ibrahim Babangida usurped power as the president of Nigeria in August 1985, he announced a transition program of five years. When the five years were coming to an end he prolonged his stay in power by another three years. At the end of this, he still saw some reasons for cancelling the June 12, 1993 election in order to remain in power, Ewelu (2004).

Recommendations

1. Nigeria as a developing country really needs to transform and put a stop to money politics at least for the bad side of it on governance.
2. Nigeria leaders' quest for material wealth, I must win syndrome, winner takes it all, tribalism, and godfatherism must be halted.
3. A stable environment should be established and maintained in order to provide equal political recruitment, promotion, nomination, election and appointment system that will provide men and women the same option and opportunities.
4. There is need for an increased confidence in our elected officials, and our faith in the democratic governance of Nigeria should also increase.
5. People should be allowed to vote for their preferred candidates during elections without fear caused by thugs who are instrument of godfatherism and selfishness.

Conclusion

Money politics perverse justice and creates problems for good governance and political inclusiveness. It takes away competence and merit and creates room for mediocrity. It creates room for who is who in a party and in government. I am strongly convinced that there is a solution. his can come through responsible leadership in governance. Shuny money nother and fun by from leadership Our dear country Nigeria is in Serious need of patriotic leaders who have the right conception of leadership as service to the people, for the protection and promotion of their life and interests. We need professionals in politics rather than professional politicians. We need leaders who are prepared to sacrifice everything to bring our Nation from the economic quagmire.

References

- Agundu, Oliver (2007), "Politics of Bitterness; Scanning the Nigerian Democratic Experience", in: Odimegwu, Ezeani, and Aghamelu (Eds), *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa. 2006 World Philosophy Day @ Unizik*, Vol. 2. Awka: Fab Educational Book.
- Ewelu, Benjamin (2004), "Altruism and Sincerity: Indispensable Ingredients for Responsible Governance in Africa" in: Oguejiofor J. O.: (Ed), *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa. Studies in African Philosophy*, Vol. 1. Enugu: Delta Publications.
- Ochayi Chris (2021), "Politics: Winners take all Syndrome Dangerous- Jonathan in: Vanguard Newspaper Retrieved on 13 March, 2022 from <https://www.vanguardniger.com>
- Okike, Benedict (2000), *The Practice of Sharia in Nigeria: A Democratic Circular State*. Owerri: Amamihe Publications.
- Oviasuyi, Patrick (2009), "Impact of Godfatherism on Nigerian Politics and Administration: Anambra and Oyo States Experiences in Educational Research. Quarterly, A Publication of Behavioural Research Press, (LLC), Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana 71245, USA, Volume 33, Issue 2, December, 2009.