



Nigerian Electoral Process And Its Workability Through Adult Education Programmes: A Position Paper

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ABSTRACT

This paper has carefully perused the title, Nigerian electoral process and it's Workability through adult education. In the process it conceptualized election, electoral process, education, and Adult Education as a major approach of achieving a workable Nigerian electoral process through the realistic adult education programmes which are capable of re-orientating the eligible votes. The paper also mirrored briefly the historical background of the Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria. It also considered three adult education programmes through which the Nigerian electoral process can become viable and finally, suggestions were made. They include: adopting A-Two party system as against multi-party system; ensuring realistic campaign process by political parties among others.

Keywords: Nigerian electoral process, workability, adult education, programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Stable electoral process is the most desirable democratic experience Nigerians have looked out for in the twenty years of our uninterrupted democratic atmosphere. This atmosphere had been heated up at various moments leading to abuse of power, fraudulent elections, oppression of political opponents and intimidation of journalists and corruption of the electoral process. Joseph in Agi, (2012) viewed these anti-democratic tendencies as some of the dilemmas of the Nigerian democracy. Nevertheless, most nations in the world with stable electoral process have often prided themselves with waves of positive or negative transition which gave credence to the said electoral process at times as "free and fair". Agi (2012) noted that, the prevailing political experience of various nations directly informs the political institutions, structures and activities, inclinations, loyalties and associations which are identifiable.

Sequel to the above, there is no meaningful electoral process without the citizens and education. To this, Ojie (2006) states that in a democracy, those whose responsibility is to exercise political authorities in a society perform it with the explicit consent and genuine mandate expressed at periodic intervals by the electorate through an open, free and fair electoral process. This implies that, the pivot of any electoral process is the citizen 18 years and above (adult). Also, these citizens (adults) are compulsorily given voter education, to enable them have high quality information to enhance effective electoral process. In the absence of this, imposition of different sorts will be experienced in the execution of the electoral process which is part and parcel of the community development programmes as expressed by Amirize in Kobani and Alozie (2016). This paper shall carefully view the Nigerian electoral process: its viability through Adult Education programmes.

Nigerian Electoral Process

(a) Elections in Nigeria

These are forms of choosing representatives into the Nigerian Federal Government and various states in Nigeria. Nigerians elect at the federal level the Head of State (the President of Nigeria) and the legislature (the National Assembly). The President is elected by the people. The National assembly has two chambers. The House of Representatives has 360 members, elected for a four-year term; each of the 36 states is divided into 3 senatorial districts, which is represented by one senator, the federal capital territory is represented by only one senator.

Nigeria has a multi-party system, with two leading political parties namely: All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). However, members of the Peoples Democratic Party founded in 1998, 21 years ago, controlled the presidency until 2015 when Muhammadu Buhari of the APC won the presidential election. The genesis of the electoral process began with the establishment of the electoral umpire through the Nigerian Constitution in 1998 by the then Military administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar after dissolving the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) which was established in December 1995 by the then General Sani Abacha's government (INEC, 2010). This body is a juridical person that may sue and be sued in its own name (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 1999).

Election Administration and Procedures Administration

a. Independent National Election Commission

National Assembly, Presidential and Gubernatorial election are disinterred by a multi-tiered Federal Administrative structure organized under the authority of the independent National Election Commission (INEC). INEC is a constitutionally mandated body. The President of the Republic appoints the Chief Electoral Commissioner and 12 national Electoral Commissioners with advice from the council of State. They cannot be members of any political party, nor can they vote. Among the responsibilities Nigeria's 1999 Constitution gives INEC are the following:

Responsibilities of Nigerian INEC

1. Organize, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the president and Vice President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representative, and the House of Assembly of each State of the Federation;
2. Register political parties;
3. Monitor the operation of parties, including their finances.
4. Audit the funds and accounts of parties, and issue annual public reports on such;
5. Register eligible voters, and maintain accurate voter registration lists for all elections;
6. Monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations for such.

b. Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC)

Next in line of federal administrative authority are Nigeria's resident Electoral Commissioners, each of whom is appointed by the president to exercise administrative authority over the electoral apparatus of the individual states with respect to Federal Elections and maintain custody over the State's voter registry under the supervision of INEC. The REC appoints the state's Senatorial District returning officers, Federal constituency Returning officers and Local Government Area Electoral Officers. The REC is responsible for announcing the winner of state gubernatorial elections and for forwarding the State's presidential vote tally to INEC.

c. State Returning Officer (SRO)

Each state has one state returning office. They are responsible for collating gubernatorial and presidential ballot totals passed up from lower collation levels in the state. They announce the winner of State gubernatorial elections and forward the collated results of presidential voting in their state to INEC.

d. Senatorial District Returning Officers

Each state has three Senatorial district Returning Officers. The FCT has one. They are responsible for collating Senate ballots and announcing the winner of the Senate races in their respective senatorial districts.

e. Federal Constituency Returning Officers

Each State has a number of Federal Constituency Returning Officers equal to the number of constituencies in that state. They are responsible for collating House ballot and announcing the winner of the races for their respective constituencies.

f. Local Government (LGA) Electoral Officer

Nigeria is divided into 774 LGAs, each with an Electoral Officer. The number of LGAs in each state varies. LGA Electoral Officers are appointed by and responsible to the Resident Electoral Commissioner in their State. They have custody over the voter register for their LGA under the supervision of the State's REC. They are responsible within their areas of jurisdiction for the organization of approximately 156 Electoral Wards and 150 voting Stations, a responsibility that includes appointment of all election officers and polling station clerks at these levels. They are also responsible for overseeing the collation of the vote

coming up from the individual polling stations through the electoral wards in their area, and for the forwarding of those collated election results.

g. Supervising Presiding Officers (SPOs)

Supervising Presiding Officers will each be responsible for assuring that election materials are made available to clusters of about 10 Voting Stations and for providing general oversight of those stations on Election Day.

h. Presiding Officers (POs)

Presiding Officers are the officers in charge of individual Voting Stations on Election Day. The presiding officers' decisions on any matter relating to the marking of ballots or the declaration of results at the Voting Stations are final.

Eligibility to Vote

All Nigerian citizens 18 years of age and above are eligible to register to vote in elections. INEC is responsible for organizing and implementing the registration process compiling and distributing the registration lists to states and localities, providing citizens with voter registration cards, and regularly updating the registration lists.

Voter Registration

INEC was charged with the task of creating a new computer registry of Nigerian's estimated 84.27 million eligible voters nationwide. INEC's voter registry serves as the basis for national / gubernatorial and local elections in Nigeria. The latter is under the administrative control of the State Independent Election Commissions (SIECs) and not INEC. Note the creation of the registry as identified as a critically important step forward in the development of the Nigeria's electoral system.

Balloting and Vote Tabulation Processes

The following are the processes:

- Voting Station
- Voter Identification
- Ballots
- Tendered Ballots
- Voting
- Vote tabulation

Political Party Registration and Candidate Filings

Overall, candidates from 30 political parties competed in the elections. Most of the 30 registered political parties were newly constituted and had not participated in an election campaign before. In 1999, the Nigerian government only recognized three parties. It wasn't until 2002 that INEC conferred recognition first on three additional parties and then in December, on 24 others. To be officially recognized, parties must pay a fee equivalent to about \$800. The parties must also submit evidence that attests to their senior officers' identity and the fact that the officers were duly elected. The parties must have by laws and a platform conforming to Nigeria's 1999 constitution. They must also show evidence of membership and functioning office locations in at least 24 states. However, the present political atmosphere has 92 officially registered political parties.

Filing and Adjudication of Complaints

Nigeria's 2002 Election Law and the Federal Constitution establish the framework for bringing and resolving electoral complaints. Complaints regarding the result of the presidential Election are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Appeals.

Complaints regarding the results of National Assembly Elections are under the jurisdiction of National Assembly Election Tribunals. Furthermore, complaints pertaining to the results of elections for governorship or state legislatures are under the jurisdiction of Governorship and Legislative Houses Electoral Tribunals. Electoral Tribunals must be constituted no later than 14 days prior to an election.

Only candidate in an election, or a political party which has fielded a candidate in an election have standing to file an election petition. The petition must be filed within 30 days of the time the election result was declared. Grounds for bringing a complaint include: questioning the winning candidate's legal standing to have run in the

election; allegations that the balloting and tabulation processes were not administered in compliance with the provisions of the election law; that the petitioner was validly nominated but unlawfully excluded from the election. The court of appeals and Electoral Tribunals can nullify the result of an election and either declare a new winner (in the case where it can be established that the person has won a majority of the valid vote) or order a new election. The winning candidate against whom the court or Tribunal declares has 21 days in which to file an appeal.

Campaign Financing

All registered political parties in Nigeria are entitled to receive public funding to support general operations and the costs of campaigning. For operating expenses, 30 percent of an annual grant is divided equally by each of Nigeria's 30 parities. The remaining 70 percent is distributed based on the percentage of seats held by the party in the National Assembly. For election campaigns, 30 percent of a grant is divided equally and the remaining 70 percent is allocated based upon how many House and Senate seats the party actually wins in the election. Reliable information on the overall size of the campaign grants is not available. Parties are not limited to public finance and the larger parties raise substantial sums from private contributors. Parties may neither raise nor hold funds outside of Nigeria.

Though there are no limits on fund raising, campaign spending is capped. No party may spend more than 20 naira (about 15 cents) times the number of names on the voter registration lists where the party is fielding candidates. Thus, if a party has a candidate running for a seat in the House of Representatives from each of Nigeria's 360 Federal Constituency Districts, and the nationwide total number of names appearing on the Voter Registry was 65 million, the party could spend no more than about \$10 million. The fine for overspending is 500,000 naira (about \$3,759).

Parties are subject to annual audits by INEC, which also audits their election campaigns. The parties must make the information in these audits available to the public, including annual party operating budgets, campaign spending, and the names of all financial contributors and the sums they contributed. INEC has the authority to establish limits on the contributions of individuals and corporate entities.

Preview of Past Elections in Nigeria

2007 Election

The Nigerian general elections of 2007 were held on 14 April and 21 April 2007. Governorship and state assembly elections were held on 14 April, while the presidential and national assembly elections were held a week later on 21 April, Umaru Yar'Adua won the highly controversial election for the rolling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and was sworn in on 29 May. The ruling PDP won 26 of the 32 states, according to INEC, including Kaduna State and Katsina State, where the results were contested by the local population. Following the presidential election, groups monitoring the election gave it a dismal assessment. Chief European Union observer Max van den Berg reported that the handling of the polls had "fallen far short" of basic international standards, and that "the process cannot be considered to be credible. A spokesman for the United States Department of State said it was "deeply troubled" by election polls, calling them "flawed", and said it hoped the political parties would resolved any differences over the election through peaceful, constitutional means.

2011 Elections

A parliamentary election was held in Nigeria on 9 April 2011. The election was originally scheduled to be held on 2 April, but was later postponed to 4 April.

A presidential Election was held in Nigeria on 16 April 2011, postponed from 9 April 2011. The election follows controversy as to whether a Muslim or Christian should be allowed to become president given the tradition of rotating the top office between the religions and following the death of Umaru Yar'Adua, who was a Muslim and Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian assuming the interim presidency. Following the election, widespread violence took place in the northern parts of the country as Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner on 19 April. The elections were reported in the International media as having run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud in contrast to previous elections, in particular the widely disputed 2007 election. The United States Department said the election was "successful" and a "substantial improvement" over 2007, although it added the vote rigging and fraud also took place.

2015 Election

The 2015 general election was originally scheduled to hold 14 February but was later postponed to 28 March (Presidential, senatorial and House of Representatives) and 11 April 2015 (Governorship and state house of As-

sembly. General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress emerged as the winner of the presidential elections and was sworn in on 29 May, 2015. It was the first time in the history of Nigeria that an incumbent President lost an election. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the People Democratic Party lost his seat to Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress.

2019 Elections

Presidential, National Assembly Election was scheduled for 16 February 2019 while state and local government elections were scheduled for 2 March, 2019. Elections were postponed by one week after INEC cited logistic challenges. The rescheduled dates were 23 February and 9 March, 2019.

Current President, Muhammadu Buhari is seeking re-election. The primary contender is former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Kingsley Moghalu of the Young Progressives Party (YPP), Yele Sowore of the African Action Congress (AAC) and Fela Durotoye of the Alliance for a New Nigeria (ANN) and other popular candidates who are all relatively young, late last year these three parties alongside some others attempted to form a coalition. However the candidates pulled out of the coalition and decided to continue running on their respective platforms. There are 73 candidates contesting in the presidential election.

The 2019 governorship and state house of assembly election was earlier scheduled for 2 March 2019 was re-scheduled for Saturday 9, March 2019. With two major political parties; All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party Fielding candidates in the elections across various states except Rivers where a court order prohibits The all Progressive congress from fielding candidates as a result of internal crisis with the state chapter of the party.

Voters Education

This means providing citizens of a democracy with basic information about participating in elections. It is often provided by the state itself, often through a national electoral commission, so it is therefore important that it is politically non- partisan. An appropriate voter education would provide citizens with the following knowledge regarding stages of election in Nigeria as listed below:

Stages of Election in Nigeria

It is evident that the presidential election will be very fierce because in this case both candidates have approximately equal chances of ascending unto the seat of power. However, the difficult and unstable relationship between the two major parties is a big issue. The leaders of the presidential race are caused not so much by ideological differences as by the struggle for the seat of power. Difficult relationships also became a hindrance to the introduction of changes in the electoral legislation, which were designed to present fraud when using electronic cards for voting.

Also drawing your attention to the steps to be taken to vote in the election process in Nigeria 2019

1. A Nigerian citizen must go to the INEC website and find his polling station
2. You need to come to the selected polling station for registration
3. You will be photographed, and information about you is recorded
4. You will be given a card, which is the right to vote on election day

Accreditation of the Polling Station

1. Go to the polling station and join the queue
2. Make sure that your name is on the list and is assigned to the area in which you came
3. Leave your prints to get accredited.

Voting Day

1. Get a list of candidates
2. Got to a special booth and mark who you want to vote in the ballot
3. Put your ballot paper in the ballot box

The election campaign in Nigeria is on the final stages. And it remains only to expect transparent and fair elections, as well as an honest election campaign from each of the candidates. Of course, besides the two main leaders, dozens of other candidates will also try to get the maximum electoral support. We wish all the candidates well and Nigerians the best.

Record of Registered Voters and PVCs Collected

It is worth while mentioning that a total number of registered votes and collected permanent voters lands are as follows: 84,004,084 and PVCs collected studs at 72,775,585 representing 86.3% of the total PVCs provided uncollected PVCs is 11,228,582 representing 13.7% (INEC 2019). A total number of 2,833,101 PVCs were collected in Rivers State as against the total number of registered voters of 3,215,273 in the state. Also, there are two major electoral bodies in Rivers State namely Rivers Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) and the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). There are 23 local government areas, 319 electoral wards and 4,442 polling units, in the state.

Effects of Violence in Nigeria Electoral Process

Violence is the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage or destroys. Violence have been a recurrent decimal in the Nigerian Electoral Process right from 1999, till present day, thousands of live list and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed. Amidst all that have happened in the just concluded presidential election were the incidence at Abonnema Community in Akuku-Toru Local Government Area and that of Degema Local Government Area all of Rivers State.

Among the two sisters LGAs, the Akuku-Toru LGA is most affected with scores of people dead, properties destroyed, inhabitants deserting their homes for safety, molestation and other atrocities (INEC, 2019).

However, the Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State was not as violent as the former. Hence, voting was not achieved in the former, while it was a remarkable success in the latter (INEC, 2019). In furtherance to the above, there was pronounced rigging, vote buying and selling, snatching of ballot boxes by security agencies, adoption of electoral officers and so on (INEC, 2019).

Education

Education is undoubtedly the bedrock of any nation's growth and development. It is to the nation what blood is to the human body and the woman to child-bearing. It is the promise of open, the mind-exposer to the challenges of life and promise of modern of age. In the view of Ihejirika (2007), a truly educated man or woman is indeed an asset to the society. Education according to Osokoya in Okoroma (2006) is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. Also, the federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2008) defined education as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing powers of reason and judgment and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. In addition, it is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits.

Sequel to the view of Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008), the community people have the issue of illiteracy which makes it impossible for them to keep accuracy records of events as they occur. In the same vein, ignorance is closely related to illiteracy which makes the grass root people unable to perceive and pursue good things of life within and around them this fact was also buttressed by Onyeosu (2007:33) while discussing problems of felt need opined that:

Because of historically rooted fatalism, over-dependence on others, lack of self confidence and loss of all opportunities to go to school earlier in their lives, many traditional rural people relax in ignorance and resort to total reliance on luck and magic for their welfare and that of their families and community.

Based on all the above, Freire in Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) was emphatic that, only constant education of the people can solve the problem of ignorance. This also has a direct bearing on the people coming out of poverty and not forgetting that, the Federal Office of Statistics (2004) pegs the average poverty level in Nigeria at 54.4%. According to the world Poverty Clock (2018), Nigeria ends 2018 with 90.8 million people living in extreme poverty constituting a staggering 46.4% of its estimated 195.6 million total population.

Adult Education

This as a branch in education is geared towards the sensitization of the people at every stage of their development which include political development, social development, economic development, cultural development, spiritual development, physiological development, psychological development, gerontology development and functional development.

However, some assumed this concept as education for the elderly members of the community who attend evening classes or people who desire to remedy an educational deficiency they may have suffered earlier on in their lives

which lead to terminating of their academic pursuit. According to Amirize in Kobani and Alozie (2016), Adult education is pragmatic and functionally related to needs of individual and society, whether short-term or long-term. It is also change oriented in the area of felt-needs which it seeks to address. Hence, adult education is instilling in the individual the ability to get along with other people without behaving like a beast.

Kobani and Taylor (2017) sees adult education as a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a life-long learner. Basically, adult education builds on specific philosophy about learning and teaching based on the assumption that adults can and wants to learn, that they are able and willing to take responsibility for that learning, and that the learning itself should respond to their needs.

Adult education, just like the concept adults has varied definitions for varied social settings (Ezimah, 2004). However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International conference in Nairobi, Kenya, (1976) as reported in Nzeneri (2010:10) and adopted the definition of adult-education Kobani and Alozie (2016) as:

The entire body of organized educational process, whether the content, level and method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (p.74).

This definition is indeed comprehensive as it illuminates the meaning, content and scope of Adult education. Fasokun in Kobani and Taylor (2017) opined that, Adult education is not concerned with preparing people for life, but rather helping or enabling people (Adults) to live more successfully as useful, acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies.

Townsend-Coles in Kobani and Alozie in Kobani and Taylor (2017) sees Adult education as all forms of educative experiences needed by both men and women (Adults) according to their varying interests and requirements at their differing levels of comprehension, ability and in their changing roles and responsibilities throughout life. However Nzeneri (2008) added that, adult education is any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust to changes and challenges in their lives and society.

In the light of the above, Nyerere in the most recent mirrored adult education as a life-long activities that is relevant not only to development but to life and adjustment to it (development). This concept endows adults (males and females) with the requisite knowledge, attitude and skills to employ quickly to address day-to-day life challenges the adult experiences in his/her environment which also include: physical, social, economic, political and cultural setbacks. The beam of light called Adult Education should emphasize total involvement of the community at micro and macro levels without delay or exception. To this, Abdi, Ellis and Shizha (2005) carefully agreed that democratic culture can be achieved through programmes such as social conscientization, teaching target population issues of civic responsibilities, teaching classes that expose target audience to their right as citizens of the community and country, programmes of political awareness regarding their role in development, citizenship education that educate about political processes, education that emphasizes the value of participation in democratic processes, education that teach acceptable political behaviour, programmes designed to boost democracy in the community, programmes designed to teach local values comparatively, programmes that emphasis gender equity, programme that encourage public discussion, education on rule of law, education on social and economic justices etc.

CONCLUSION

This paper has carefully and extensively elucidated the title, Nigerian electoral process: its viability through Adult Education. It is pertinent to understand that a better and improved electoral process in Nigeria can only be achieved when the adults (Males and Females) are given adequate civic Education at every stage of our nation's development. This shall empower the citizenry to do what is right when it comes to the issue of election and election related matters.

Suggestions

The following are suggestions for future development of the Nigerian electoral process. These include:

- Adopting A-Two party system; as against multi party system;
- The speedy signing into law of the 2018 electoral bill before the President of Nigeria ;
- Ensuring realistic campaign process by political parties;
- Avoid god-fatherism in our politics;
- Vehemently prohibit very form of vote selling and buying viz-a-viz vote buying and vote selling.
- Avoidance of high level military involvement in the electoral process;
- Ensure that the nomination, appointment and confirmation of INEC national officers should be done by the National Assembly; and Ensure also that the INEC chairman is a carrier electoral officer;
- Also, consider electronic voting system during the build-up of the 2023 general election.

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