

NIGERIAN POLITICIANS, DISCIPLINE, INTEGRITY, CHARACTER AND THE RULE OF LAW: APPLICATION VERSUS FINANCIAL SPENDING IN 2019 FEDERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

This paper gives an ethical evaluation of the 2019 Federal Elections in Nigeria as it bothers on questions of discipline, integrity, and character of Nigerian Politicians with attendant consequences on the rule of law. The 2019 General election was characterized by severe malpractices, irregularities and gross abuse of the rule of law that governed democratic elections. From the critical review of relevant literatures and opinions of political analysts on the 2019 General elections, the paper identifies the following burning ethical issues: vote buying, underage voting, snatching of ballot boxes by political thugs, phenomenon of inconclusive elections and compromising nature of security operatives, inducement of electoral officers at the polling units' levels, and pre and post-electoral violence. These acts were perpetrated by politicians and their proxies all in the bid to win elections, in order to have access to State power and resources. These acts so perpetrated by politicians raised ethical and legalistic questions. However, the major concern of the paper is on the unprincipled implications of these acts. Thus, the paper argues that for Nigeria to address these ethical issues arising from the 2019 Federal Elections and subsequent elections there is need for Nigeria to have a new approach to leadership recruitment and governance. The paper deduces that discipline, integrity, and character excellence should be the guiding values for Nigerian politicians and prospective politicians. The paper employs the method of critical analysis.

Keyword: elections, politicians, ethics, voting, character

Introduction

The task before this paper is to give an ethical evaluation on 2019 Nigerian Federal Election, as it bothers on discipline, integrity, and character of Nigerian politicians with its attendant consequences on the rule of law. Rule of law is an ethical and legal axiom that finds expression in the extant laws of the land and the conventions of a people. This is why the strength of democracy or any regime that claim to be democratic must conform to its processes and institutions to the rule of law as different from the whims and caprices of individuals (Montesquieu, 1949). The 2019 General election as reported from various editorial reviews of the dailies, public commentators, and eye-witness account indicated that there were incidents of widespread electoral irregularities such as rigging, ballot box snatching, thuggery, intimidation of opposition by security operatives as directed by the ruling party (Abati, 2019). More so, it was reported that in some places that electoral officers were molested (YIAGA Africa, 2019). There were also report of logistical failure on the part of the electoral commission which was deemed by the opposition as premeditated by the ruling party to frustrate electorates who are sympathetic to their manifesto. These logistical failures include card reader failure, late arrival of electoral materials and officers in some perceived opposition 'stronghold', and compromising nature of electoral officers and security agents at the Polling Unit level. These incidents that emanated from the 2019 Federal Election raises fundamental ethical issues such as: is there a connection between the ethical values a people holds and the nature of their election? What is the moral disposition of Nigerian politicians towards election? Is election a war or a civil activity? What kind of ethical blueprint (theory) does Nigeria politician operate? Is there a place for ethical values like discipline, integrity and character formation in upholding the rule of law in an election? What role should money play in the electioneering process? These and other questions are the philosophical cum ethical issues that this paper will be interrogating.

Furthermore, Nigeria in the course of her history had witnessed various elections in its political development, however, the 2019 Federal election marks a milestone achievement of democratic governance in Nigeria. This is because it marks the 20 years of uninterrupted democracy in the history of Nigeria. Hence, it is this significance that gives this paper it credence to reflect on Nigerian Journey of democracy as it bothers on ethical imperatives and the rule of law in the conduct of free, fair and credible election that can enthrone a legitimate

government that is truly based on the 'consent of the people' (Locke, 1823). Though there are debates on the relevance of ethics in politics, with some scholars arguing that ethics should not have a place in politics because politics is a science that should not entertain normativity in its approaches (Girardin, 2012). Whereas, others (Arendt, 2012; Freire, 2000) argues that politics without ethics poses a danger to civil society. Thus, this paper is grounded on the latter, which means that politics without ethics can be a tool for evil in the hands of unscrupulous politicians. Hence, the very relationship upon which politics is based in society, necessarily entails that it should be guided by ethical imperatives or considerations. Ethics becomes the searchlight that beams on political actors as they carry out their activities in society.

Therefore, this paper shall be divided into three sub-sections. Section one deals with ethical issues that emanate from the 2019 Nigerian Federal Election, section two will give a critical analysis of Nigerian Politicians and ethical imperatives, and the rule of law. While, section three will deal with the implication of money politics in the form of vote buying, inducement of electoral officers and security agents on the integrity and credibility of subsequent elections in Nigeria.

2019 Nigerian Elections: Some Ethical Consideration

According to Abati (2019), "Nigeria 2019 Federal Election was not about ideas. It was about brawn, cash, and impunity". If what Abati reported as the state of affairs in the 2019 Federal Election holds true, it then means that the election falls short of what is obtainable in democratic society elsewhere. More so, for YIAGA Africa (a local observer group that deploy the use of ICT tools in observing the election), the 2019 Federal Election especially the Presidential election was characterized by shortcoming like logistical challenges faced by INEC, which resulted in late opening of polling units in some areas, gross misconducts by political parties which compromised the ability of citizens to vote and undermined public confidence in the process. The group further states that the election was not what Nigerians expected neither is it what they deserved (2019:1). From the submissions of Abati and YIAGA Africa, it is clear that the 2019 Federal Election is filled with its own contradictions and ethical dilemma on the part of the electoral commission, the electorates, political parties, and politicians. What are those actions and inactions that was performed by parties during the elections to circumvent the rules of the elections? This question

assumes that election is a legal and human affair, however, since it is a human affair it raises moral questions on the part of the actors involved.

No doubt the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), operates in a very frustrating and difficult conditions like lack of autonomy, inadequate funding, and lack of appropriate organizational and managerial capacities (Adetula, 2008). There is still a need to raise and discuss the various fundamental issues that arise from the 2019 Federal Elections which are capable of marring the conduct of free, fair and credible election in Nigeria. Some of these issues include:

- Underage voting
- Snatching of ballot boxes by political thugs
- Inconclusive election phenomenon
- Pre and post-electoral violence
- Vote buying
- Inducement of electoral officers at the polling unit levels
- Compromising nature of security operatives

These issues need ethical evaluation to ascertain their moral status. More so, it is very pertinent to add that some of the above actions were carried out by politicians either directly or through their proxies. The reasons for this are that Politicians are the major players in an election and it is very germane that they won at all cost, hence, accusing them of the above is stating the obvious.

Underage voting

In Nigeria the minimal age required for an individual to be judged eligible to vote in an election is 18 years and a person below 18 years is not eligible to vote (2010 Electoral Act). Thus, underage voting is a situation whereby politicians conniving with electoral officers from the point of registration of voters, register persons below the age of 18 years, consequently, are allowed to vote in an election. The reason some politicians involve themselves in underage voting, is because with it, they can have majority vote in order to have unfair advantage over their opponents. This action is not only criminal it is also immoral. The morality of this action is that election which is based on universal adult suffrage is made for those who are constitutionally recognized as adults, and are expected to vote and be voted for, not for minors. Hence, it shows the desperations and criminal mindedness of some politicians. Although underage age voting is not widespread, it mostly occurs in the northern part of Nigeria, especially, Kano

and Sokoto during the General elections (Punch newspaper, February 23, 2019 & This Day Newspaper 2019).

Snatching of Ballot Boxes by political thugs

One of the tenets of democracy is that leaders or rulers emerge from the result of the total vote cast in an election. The ballot is the avenue for electing leaders in a democratic society and not the employment of instruments of violence. Hence, to disrupt the electoral process in order to weaken an opponent in his or her perceived stronghold, politicians use thugs to snatch ballot boxes either during the voting process or after the voting process, in order to make the election either inconclusive or to reduce the margin of lead in the election. This act is not only criminal is against the democratic ethos and expectation of a sane society. Civility entails that every person's respect the basic rules of conduct in any sphere of society, and if a person refuses either deliberately or out of greed for power to disrupt a civilized process that goes to show the mental state of that person. If some politicians are deliberately sending thugs to disrupt the electoral process that shows that such politicians are not only immoral but criminal. And if they eventually win, it will reflect in their style of governance. Perhaps this can account for the fact why Nigerian has not got it fair share of true democratic leadership.

In conclusive election phenomenon

There is no election in the world that is perfect, even in advanced democracies elections still have its own inner contradictions and challenges. However, in a situation whereby politicians use means other than the legally accepted means to determine the outcome of an election is not only immoral but also criminal. Inconclusive election is becoming a cog in the wheel of Nigeria's democracy, it not only raises the question about the credibility of such election, but it creates a situation whereby elections no longer reflect 'the will of the people'.

Pre- and Post-election related violence

Violence is one moral question that still bothers Nigeria election. Pre-election violence involves assassination, attempted assassination, and disruption of political party campaign rallies by opposing political party. More so, pre-election violence includes threats and intimidation of candidates during the electioneering processes. On the other hand, post-election violence involves total mayhem of perceived supporters of a candidate who won an election, and the

use of political thugs to provoke the loser in an election. Although, election-related violence are not new in Nigeria but the inability to eliminate it is a challenge to democracy in Nigeria. Consequently, due to sporadic nature of electoral violence and the volatility involve in such situation, it has resulted in high voter's apathy. Therefore, how can we justify the fact that an election where 84 million persons register and 72 million collected their Permanent Voter's Card (PVC), only about 35 million actually voted in the general election (www.inecnigeria.org)? According to Smah (2008), there are two factors that are responsible for electoral violence in Nigeria include, Nigerian political culture and the zero-sum philosophy that drive the process of politicking in Nigeria. This zero-sum philosophy is rooted in the 'investment mentality' that govern political party and election funding in Nigeria (Olorunmola, 2018). The interplay of these twin factors is responsible for election violence in Nigeria. What Smah (2008) is say essentially is that election violence has a long history in Nigeria and the 'win at all cost' mentality is fuelling this behavior in Nigeria.

Vote buying

One of the hallmarks of electoral democracy is the opportunity it gives to eligible citizens to elect their leaders in a civilize manner. It presumed that the citizens are open to a myriad of choices, in terms of candidates and their manifestoes from which they (citizens) choose who will lead them for a particular duration. The choice so made is based on the promises, manifesto, and ideology of the leader. Thus, anything outside the above practice is anti-democracy (Ojo, 2008). Hence, issues like vote buying or harvesting are anti-democratic. Vote buying is a deliberate inducement or enticement of voters with money, food items and other material values, with the intention of influencing their decision during voting. This practice is gradually becoming the norm in Nigeria's democracy with severe consequences on who eventually becomes a winner in an election. The problem with this practice is that it gives those with too much money the leverage to hijack the electoral process, in order, to determine the outcome of an election (Yagboyaju and Simbine 2020, p.5). If this practice is not checked it can degenerate Nigerian democracy to a plutocracy, whereby political rent-seekers without any people-centric developmental agenda will be administering the Nigerian State. Though many factors are responsible for the phenomenon of vote buying, however, the high rate of poverty and ignorance in Nigeria stands at the apex of other factors. To paint the picture further, Adetula (2008, p.xxviii) opines that "today in Nigeria, money politics, vote buying, godfatherism and "share the money" are regular household phrases

or slogans portraying moral decadence of politicians”. This goes to show the pathetic situation of electoral democracy in Nigeria.

Inducement of electoral officers at the polling Unit level

Due to the desperation to win an election at all cost, political parties and their candidates usually involve in the act of inducing electoral officers with money and other material means to condone their act of malpractices and irregularities at the polling unit. Some electoral officers are given amount of money that is far bigger than the stipend that INEC gives them. This is made possible because election in Nigeria is won or lost at the polling unit level, if a politician can ‘buy’ as many electoral and presiding officers at the polling units, then, he or she is sure of victory in the election. This act of bribing electoral officers compromises the integrity of the electoral process at the long run.

Compromising nature of security operatives

It is a commonplace in Nigeria to see security operatives aligning with the political party that is in power and not the Nigerian people during an election. There are reports in so quarters that security operatives were used deliberately by the party in power to intimidate, harass and terrorize the opposition during the election. Security operatives are agents of the Nigerian state not the machinery of any political party or politician to actually their will. In a situation where security operatives instead of protecting the citizenry are used by the ruling party, to perpetuate their interest in an election, is not only immoral but it is against the logic of a sane society. Hence, the use of security operatives by the Party in Power to intimidate and harass opposition is an act of state terrorism.

Nigerian Politicians, Character And The Rule Of Law

This section will look at the importance of rule of law and the character of Nigerian politicians in the conduct of free, fair and credible election that commands the confidence of all Nigeria which ensure the legitimacy of government. According to Akhaine (2019), a sound electoral process is meant to achieve four cardinal objectives: accountable rulers, open society, social justice, and mass participation of the citizenry in the art of governance. It is very germane to add that democracy which election is one of its institutions is different from other political arrangements because it gives the power of the state to the people themselves. Hence, if the people’s will are respected, as reflected in

the outcome of a credible election it promotes good governance and legitimacy. Rulers who respect the will of the majority in an election will be accountable to the people. More so, credible elections that recognizes the desire of the majority and respect it promotes the principles of the open society. Thus, the strength of democracy is actually anchored on free, fair and credible elections that are organized on the principles of social justice, fair play and accountability.

Furthermore, good character and the rule of law are the cornerstones which can be used to build a just, democratic and open society. If the ruling class of any society, lack good character and disregard the rule of law with impunity that society is doomed in the right sense of the word. Hence, from the ancient period of western and African philosophy, philosophers have prescribed and are still interrogating the imperatives of good character, and its importance for good governance and social cohesion. To corroborate the above point, Falana (2007) opines thus: "the rule of law, transparency, and accountability in government served not only as means to counter corruption but also as fundamental conditions of good governance". In essence, Falana (2007) submission emphasizes the point that, respect for the rule of law and good character on the part of politicians are the necessary condition to promote good governance.

From the above it suffices to say that dishonest, corrupt and unethical behavior among politicians sometimes undermines the trust and confidence of the people that government can do "good" and advance the public interest. It becomes very worrisome when Nigerian Politicians employs unorthodox methods as enumerated in the previous section, all in the bid to win an election, in order to have access to state resource to appropriate to themselves and those connected to them. There is empirical research that has rightly shown that there is a significant relationship between free and fair election and sociopolitical development of a society (Omilusi, 2019). Therefore, elections provide the avenue for the emergent of a people-centric ruler who is disposed to address the concerns of the people because he/she came to power based on the people choice. Any unconventional conducts that are geared towards undermining the people choice in any election can only produce self-centered rulers who are interested in amassing wealth and looting the resources of the state. The moral rectitude of rulers comes to bear in this matter of elections and the rule of law.

As we have established beforehand that democratic leadership is a product of popular consent express through voting. If this holds true about democracy it then means that democracy abhors all forms of unconventional means that boycott popular choice in order to win an election. These unconventional means we have outlined in the preceding sections raises moral questions. The two major political parties in Nigeria (People Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress) cannot claim saint when it comes to the employment of unconventional means to win election, which was evident in the 2019 Federal Elections. This is rooted in that Nigerian attitude mostly among the elite that election is a “do or die” affair and the winners takes it all. This way of viewing election is detrimental to Nigeria’s democracy and the emergent of credible rulers who can stir the wheel of the country in the path of progress and socioeconomic development. It is clear then that elections malpractices and irregularities are promoting a culture of moral decadence that can create a situation of moral dislocation in Nigeria.

It is very pertinent to add that Nigeria does not lack appropriate laws to regulate human actions in any sphere or sector but the fundamental problem is the enforcement and compliance of such laws by the people most especially the rich and highly connected individuals. Like any other country, the rich in Nigeria break the law with impunity and depend on their brigand of lawyers to defend them and their money to buy the conscience of some judges who are morally weak. This is the Nigerian situation. Hence, it means that law alone is not sufficient in regulating human conducts in the Nigerian context, we also need people of good character who have assimilated the principles and spirit of the law and are living it out in their everyday life.

Due to the limited supply of people of good character in our political space, Ejue and Ekanem (2011) opines that “the moral dislocation prevalent in our democratic and electoral systems are due to the lack of spiritual content of our educational system that include citizenship education” (p.293). This position of Ejue and Ekanem (2011) shows that the lack of proper citizenship education that is grounded on spiritual values are the prime cause of some of the moral decay we are experiencing in Nigeria electoral processes. The ancient Greek society that gave the world democracy, understood this fact that is why they made it mandatory that for anyone who desire to participate in the life of the *polis* that person must be educated. The Sophists and Socrates were the ready teachers of

politicians in the ancient Greek *poleis* and their teachings of ethics, rhetoric, and city customs were geared toward preparing future political leaders (Ejue & Ekanem, 2011). According to Socrates to know the good is to do the good and ignorance is vice (cited in Edet, 2016). If this Socratic dictum holds true, it then means that Nigerian politicians, in using unconventional means to win elections are acting in ignorance. This is because if Nigerian Politicians understands that free, fair and credible elections are the building block of a solid democratic culture, they will not resort to the use of means that are not only illegal but immoral in the bid to win an election.

Furthermore, a solid democratic culture that is mid-wife by free, fair and credible elections will bring about social peace and more development in Nigeria. This is because a democratic culture makes it possible for citizens to exercise their rights to vote and make the appropriate choices that will result in policies that will safeguard their wellbeing. This can only happen in a democratic system that is open to continuous change, through the applications of new ideas and innovative thinking. This is why democracy promotes institutions that create more incentives for all and at the same time create more opportunities for all. Thus, if what is prevalent in Nigeria is not address it will lead to a precarious situation whereby “money bags” will determine who get what, when and how. This is the reason integral ethical formation of the consciences of our politicians are a sine qua non to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria.

Nigerian Politicians, Discipline, Integrity And Financial Spending

It has been argued in some quarters that politics and moral values are parallel entities that cannot be reconciled. This is because politics operates on different realm from morality as such moral imperative are incompatible with the nature of politics. However, Ajayi (2016) argues on the contrary that morality ought to be the defining factor in politics and politicking including elections. He further states that killing, electoral malpractices, and political corruption are consequences of immoral politics. Immoral politics is a situation where unconventional means are employed by politicians to manipulate, and undermine the electoral processes in order, to win elections and have access to the resources of the state. One of the fundamental problems of immoral politics is that it undermines the rule of law and negates the logic of democratic and civilized society. Thus, to address the problem caused by immoral politics, Nigerian politicians need a guiding value that should guide their conducts and

practices in an election. These guiding values must also be the basis for training future politicians. This paper identifies discipline and integrity as that guiding values that should guide financial spending and general conduct in an election.

The value of discipline

Discipline is the ability to control one's behavior or the way ones live, work and interact with others (Hornby, 2005). In another sense, discipline is the inner propensity to obey rules, laws and agreed upon obligations, with the intention of fulfilling one's responsibility and duty. The value of discipline entails that one must conform and comply with legal and moral imperatives, even if it is against one personal interest. The value of discipline is like a categorical imperative that implies that one should act in that maxim that is stipulated by the law and moral authority. Sometimes human beings act irrational and are derived by self-interest but discipline is what curtails the animalistic tendencies in human beings. Hence, all forms of training whether academic or professional training are geared towards the inculcation of the value of discipline. The question we need to ask is: to what extent do Nigerian politicians obey the laws and rules of election spending in Nigeria?

It is an indubitable fact that money drives politics and elections cost money. This is because it takes money to set party's secretariats in virtually every ward, Local Government areas, States and at the national level. It takes money to promote the brand of a political party, and do advertisement in the media. A political party needs to spend money on logistic, transportation, campaign rallies, entertainment, buy vehicles, pay sitting allowance for it executive officers, pay staff salary, organize meetings, and support their candidates. More so, not only political party that has huge bills to pay as a result of politicking, candidates who are contesting various positions also have their own share of huge bills and financial obligations to meet. This is why to be a candidate for any of the major political party in Nigeria, one must have the money and control an enormous amount of resources (Abati, 2018).

Nonetheless, the fear of making money the sole driver of the electioneering process has made governments globally to enact laws that are geared towards monitoring, auditing and checkmating election revenue and spending. In Nigeria, sections 222-229 of 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as Amended) stipulates rules and regulations that should guide the operations of political parties.

Furthermore, sections 225 and 226 affirms the powers of INEC to monitor, inquire into and assess campaign finances and party sources of and management of fund. What all these goes to show is that Nigeria has the appropriate laws to guide elections spending but the problem is the enforcement. The same politicians who made these laws are sometimes the ones who violate them. Furthermore, according to the 2010 Electoral Act, it stipulates that all political parties must submit the audited version of their account 6 months after election and failure to comply will attracts some sanctions. The rationale behind this regulation is that the Commission should scrutinize suspicious expenditure and quarries illegal sources of finance. However, it is so pathetic that some political parties violated this law with impunity and it seem the Commission is handicap when it comes to enforcement of this law because there is no court case on infraction of election spending. Thus, all these goes to show lack of discipline among Nigerian Politicians when it comes to adherence to basic rules of election.

The value of Integrity

Humans are value-driven beings, which account for the multiplicity of ethical values that define the morality of human actions. Integrity is one of such ethical values that represents honesty, uprightness, adherence to rules and regulations, beliefs, and principles that guide conduct and actions. Hence, a man of integrity is one who abhors all forms of lying, cheating, theft, impartiality and undue advantage over others. The defining characteristics of a leader is the level of integrity she or he commands. Aristotle (2000) opines that integrity is the virtue that should guide the ruler because ruling the state is an art that is rooted in virtue. If what Aristotle states hold true, it then follows that a Politician who has integrity will not involve himself or herself with electoral irregularities and malpractices of any kind. Thus, integrity is the litmus test of Nigerian politicians. However, the sad part of the Nigerian situation is that some of our politicians lack integrity which is evidently seen in the way and manner they conducted themselves in 2019 Federal Elections. The ethical issues that arise from the 2019 Federal Elections were perpetrated by some unscrupulous politicians who want to capture power at all means, not necessarily to serve but to have access to the resources of the State.

Political Parties, Politicians' Spending In 2019 Federal Election And The Rule Of Law

In this section, we will like to look at what the 2010 Electoral Act stipulates about the revenue and spending limit of political parties and what political parties and their candidates actually spent during the election. The essence is see whether political parties and their candidates spend above or below the benchmark set by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and what punitive action was carry out by INEC against defaulters.

As regard spending limits a federal election, the section 91 subsection 2-5 of the 2010 Electoral Act stipulate thus:

| Elective Office | Limit on Election Expenses |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| President | ₦ 1,000,000,000 |
| Governorship | ₦ 200,000,000 |
| Senate | ₦ 40,000,000 |
| House of Representatives | ₦ 20,000,000 |
| State of Assembly | ₦ 10,000,000 |

Table 1: election expense limits (source Electoral Act 2010)

The above benchmark is what the Act set for political parties and politicians to spend during election. Consequently, the Act prescribes sanctions on political parties and politicians who spend above these legal limits. For the office of the president the Act prescribe a fine of ₦1,000,000 the office of the governor fine is ₦ 800, 000 and Senate, House of Representative and State house of Assembly fine is ₦ 600,000, ₦500,000 and ₦ 300,000 respectively. Having established what the law stipulated, the pertinent question is what did political parties and politicians actually spend in 2019 Federal Election?

There are scarcity of data as regard the expenses of political parties on electioneering campaign due some factors like lack of proper recording keeping by political parties, failure on the part of INEC and other agencies to monitor, track and report political parties income and expenses (Yagboyaju & Simbine, 2020). According to Yagboyaju and Simbine (2020), another factor that may be responsible for the scarcity of data on political parties funding and expenditure is due to the weak financial regulatory mechanism of INEC as it bothers on political parties' expenses. More so, Olorunmola (2017) submits that due to the weak enforcement of INEC financial regulations on political parties, it has

consequently led to rising cost of elections in Nigeria. The Commission have failed to hold any political party accountable on their funding sources and expenditure during and after any election circle in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, Yagboyaju and Simbine (2020), citing data from the Centre for Social Justice and INEC Office were able to give an excerpt of the media expense of the two major political parties, PDP and APC during the 2019 Federal elections. From the available data it was shown that in the 2019 presidential election, PDP/Atiku spent 2,865,066,886.00 while APC/Buhari spent 4,600,047,886.00. The above expenses is only for media and if other expenses like mobilization of party's men to rallies, logistic for campaign venue, vote buying and giving of bribe to INEC officials and security agents were included it would be a different figure from the above. In other words, only expenditure on media is more than the legal limit for a Presidential election in Nigeria. This is where some of the issues are and the commission is even weak to enforce its own laws on the limit of expenditure for campaign in any election.

Conclusion

The paper has highlighted the ethical issues that arise from the 2019 election and how it bothers on financial spending and the character of the Nigerian politicians. From the conduct of the 2019 General Election, the paper identifies voting buying, thuggery, underage voting, snatching of ballot boxes, and disruption of an election in the perceived stronghold of opponents, compromising nature of security operatives, inducement of electoral officers by politicians, and the phenomenon of inconclusive elections. These ethical issues and the legal implication is a clear demonstration that elections in Nigeria are far behind what is obtainable in civilized democracies. It shows the enthronement of money as the yardstick for choosing and electing rulers in Nigeria. If this practice is not abated it will make Nigerian democracy degenerate to plutocracy and only the money bag will determine the political process of the country, which consequently, will enthrone mediocre, moral questionable characters and incompetent rulers who will only the driven by self-aggrandizement at the detriment of the common good.

Recommendations

The paper makes the following recommendations:

- The government should as a matter of urgency enrich the current curriculum on Citizenship Education to include the inculcation of values like integrity, discipline and the respect of the rule of law.
- Nigerians should deemphasize monetary inducement in electioneering rather emphasize the supremacy of ideas and ideology that are capable of building a just, democratic and prosperous nation.
- Finally, National Orientation Agency should articulate Nigerian national ethos and make all Nigerians to believe in it and make it their guiding philosophy.

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