

Money Politics in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Management

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ABSTRACT

This study examined ‘Money Politics in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Management’. The source of information for this study is secondary source. From the study, we realized that money politics in Nigeria started immediately after independence but became glaring during the 1992 campaign exercise and the major causes are: poor level of discipline in political party, poverty of the pocket and corruption, undefined party goal and godfatherism and major effects are: It perverse justice and creates problems for good governance, it takes away competence and creates room for looters, it creates way for ‘who is who’ in a party and in government, and masses interests are not assured. From our findings: It was discovered that Nigerian wealthy politicians takes advantage of level of poverty and unemployment in the country to achieve their personal interest. It was also discovered that, Nigerians don’t exhibit societal values anymore and that is why they are easily manipulated. As a result of the above findings, we made the following recommendations: Governments at all level should ensure that rule of law stands at all-time irrespective of who is involved and by so doing the people will build their trust on government. The government should ensure that societal values are restored in our society and make sure civic education is taught in schools all over the federation.

Keywords: Money, Politics, Nigeria, Causes, Effects, Management

INTRODUCTION

Money politics in a layman understanding is that kind of politics whereby members of a political party offer money and other things in order to win support from certain individual or communities during an election campaign. During elections in Nigeria, it was not uncommon to hear of instances where people were given money, rice, stock fish, salt and cloths. In return, the recipient would cast their votes for a specified political party. At the end of the day, they realised that they sold their right which is their vote to a wrong party (Essien, 2009).

The Phenomenon of money politics in Nigeria is not a new concept, the history of electioneering processes in the country, especially after independence, was largely influenced with buying and selling of votes. Money Politics is quickly shrinking the political space, becoming a key variable in determining who participates in electoral politics. As a matter of fact, nomination fees for party members seeking elective post for instance have become so high that only the rich can participate in party primaries. Drawing a reference from the 1992

campaign exercise, one of the presidential aspirants spent over one billion naira during the primaries while other not -so- rich contenders had about 120 million naira as a budget for primaries. Though the political transition of General Ibrahim Babangida annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election which consequently led to the abortion of the third republic, the trend of use money for political influence persists to date. Women and youths are the most vulnerable in this situation because of their little or lack of access to wealth (Victor in Sakariyau, et al, 2015).

Similarly, money politics reached their pinnacles in the elections that ushered in the current democratically elected government in 1999 and the civilian-civilian transition elections of 2003, 2007 and 2011, as one political scientist once observed, ‘if the use of money in the 1999 elections was open and shameless that of 2003 was outrageously indecent (Suber in Ovwasa, 2013). This seemed to have ironically pricked the conscience of former President Obasanjo, who was a beneficiary of the sordid act in the two elections to admit though, belatedly that:

With so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development (Obasanjo in Ovwasa, 2013).

Money politics assumed a frightening and consummative dimension in the 2007 elections. This is because the use of money to buy conscience appeared to have been extended to the judiciary. It will be recalled that the Governorship Candidate of the Action Congress (AC) now Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) Engineer Rauf Aregbesola had dragged the Osun State Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola, of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the Osun State First Elections Petitions Tribunal to challenge his election as the Governor of Osun State for the second term (Ovwasa, 2013).

The News Magazine of 6th July 2008, made damaging allegations against the Tribunal members and the counsel to Governor Oyinlola. The news magazine reported how two judges of the Osun State First Elections Tribunal, namely, Thomas Naron (Chairman) and J.F. Ekanem were alleged to have "slipped into Cesspool of scandal" by their very regular telephone calls and text messages to Kunle Kalejaiye (SAN) (The News Magazine July 2008) the lead counsel to Governor Oyinlola. Although these were allegations but they were weighty enough to cast the Judiciary in bad light since it is unethical for the judges of the tribunal to have private discussion regarding the case without the presence or the representative of the practitioner. As widely expected and perhaps, because of this "Unholy Marriage" between the tribunal judges and the lead counsel to Oyinlola, the verdict was given in favour of Oyinlola. In rejecting the judgment, the ACN said "*the discredited election petition tribunal in Osegbo delivered its obnoxious judgment without any atom of moral scruple or an eye for Justice* (Fayeniwo in Ovwasa, 2013). It took another two years of legal battle before this ugly situation was reverted. This is because, the Appeal Court sitting at Ibadan set aside the First Elections Petitions Tribunal Judgment and decided the case in favour of ACN candidate Rauf Aregbesola on the 26th of November, 2010, and directed that he sworn in as Osun State

Governor on the 27th of November, 2010. This was why there was no governorship election in Osun State on April 26th 2011. The fact is that the use of money or any other inducement for that matter, to perverse justice and creates problems for good governance (Ovwasa, 2013).

Furthermore, in preparations for the 2015 elections again raise the issue of highly monetized nature of Nigerian politics. It gets worse each political season. In 2014, the All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA, generated N163m from selling nomination forms to governorship aspirants for the 2014 election in Anambra State. The people's Democratic Party, PDP, raked in N184m from the same exercise not to talk of monies raked from other states of the federation. APGA's nomination form cost N10m for men and N5m for women. PDP charged same rate of N10m for both men and women. Outrageous as these expenses were at the entry point of the gubernatorial race, candidates willingly paid. Candidates are violating the Electoral Act which pegs election expenses. It is getting worse. PDP wants N11m from gubernatorial aspirants in 2015. PDP presidential aspirants paid N22m; All Progressives Congress, APC, charged presidential aspirants N27.5m, and governorship aspirants N5.5m. Alliance for Democracy's forms were made free for all aspirants for 2015 elections (Adekunle, 2014).

Again, in preparations for 2019 elections, Lauretta Onochie, Personnal Assistant on Social Media to President Muhammadu Buhari alleged that *Atiku Abubakar bribed delegates with the whooping sum of N42billion to emerge as PDP candidate.* Onochie in a post on her twitter page noted that Nigerians were 'finished' if Atiku becomes president (Fikayo, 2018). The ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, party released its timetable for the 2019 primary elections, with presidential aspirants to pay N45million naira for forms. However, the People's Democratic Party, PDP, too was reported to have also fixed a fee of N12million naira for the expression of interest and nomination forms for its presidential aspirants. Note that, a breakdown of the APC's schedule as revealed by Mr Emma Ibediro, the National Organising Secretary of the APC, it shows that for the presidential aspirants, the Expression of Interest form costs N5million while the Nomination form costs N40 million. However, based on the reported amount of the PDP, while the expression of interest form for the presidential aspirants costs N2million, the nomination form cost

N10million. If this being the case, it means that APC's form is way more expensive than that of the PDP by N33million. Also, for the Governorship forms, APC said aspirants would pay N22.5million for both expression of interest and the Nomination forms. This entails that while the Nomination forms costs N20million, the expression of interest form cost N2.5million.

This is a sharp contrast to that of the PDP which says that the governorship form costs N6million. Also, while the APC's aspirants to the House of Assembly would pay N3.8million and the Senate N7million, that of the PDP House of Representatives and the state House of Assembly cost N2.5million and N600,000 respectively. However, some Nigerians have taken to the micro-blogging site, Twitter, to compare the amounts for the forms for both parties (APC and PDP; which are the major parties in Nigeria). Number one bestselling author and former aide to Ex-President Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Pastor Reno Omokri, in his comparison, said that the APC's form is too exorbitant. Pastor Omokri, in a couple of tweets, said N45million for a presidential nomination form is too expensive. *You make mockery of the #NotTooYoungToRun Act. Your nomination forms cost 4 times what @Official PDP Nig charges. Nigeria needs a #Not Too Poor To Run Bill because of what you are doing #Renos Darts*''.

For a twitter user, Adegoke Pamilerin, @the pamilerin, he opined that, *'APC PRESIDENTIAL FORMS (N45,000,000), PDP PRESIDENTIAL FORM (N12,000,000) imagine after paying this huge money to become the president of a country, how are you going to serve the people without sorting out your own personal pocket first? Laughs Not Too Young To Run'*(Tony, 2018).

For another twitter user, Bodu Bcube Bayo, @bcube234, he says, *'Come to think of it How much should a candidature's form go for? Even 5million which the PDP is selling hers is not any less better. Whether it's free, 5k, 10k, 1million, 55million or 100million the country is full of corrupted minds (public or private sectors)'* (Tony, 2018).

For Olat Sonicpress News, @ olatdove, *'they want Young people to participate but the nomination form is higher, where do they want youths to get #45million to buy form?* (Tony, 2018). However, because the politics of money is against the interests of political democracy, it is associated with unfair elections. Rigging

elections voting in another name, casting more than one ballot, manipulating the electorate to vote against their choice, using the security agencies to intimidate voters, brutalizing of journalists, the watchdog of the society and damaging of their equipment in order not to expose their evil act, miscounting ballots or losing entire ballot boxes in rival political quarters-is the malpractice characteristics of the politics of money. Once a political party comes to power through foul means, the politicians holding office disparately try to recover electoral expenses through more malpractice such as corruption and squandering of public funds which is not beneficial to the country (Essien, 2009).

Thus, this paper was embarked upon to examine the causes, effects and management of money politics in Nigerian politics.

Causes of Money Politics

In examining the causes, the following are the major causes:

- Poor level of discipline in political party.
- Poverty of the pocket and corruption.
- Undefined party goal
- Godfatherism

Effects of Money Politics

- It perverts justice and creates problems for good governance (Ovwasa, 2013).
- It takes away competence and creates room for looters.
- It creates way for "who is who" in the party and in government.
- Masses interests are not assured.

Management of Money Politics

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.

However, there should be at least some mechanisms by which its negative consequences on good governance can be minimized. For instance, there is also money politics in the United States of America, even when legal limits are fixed in the solicitation, acceptance and disbursement of funds for political campaigns, but such limit has been honoured more in breach than in observance, and American politics has been very much oiled by money from "Fat cat contributions" (Rodee et

al, 1976), yet the American government is much more effective in service delivery to the people, than the Nigerian government (Ovwasa, 2013).

In addressing the subject matter, the researchers concurred with Ovwasa, O. Lucky, 2013, suggestions on how effectively Nigeria as a country can do away with money politics. According to Ovwasa, 2013:

There is the need for some ethical codes to be enacted for all elected officials to prohibit them from exhibiting stupendous wealth which gives negative signal to the people that election to public office gives one the rare opportunity to amass wealth.

This type of signal will of course, unnecessarily raise the stake, push the candidates in elections to see the contest as akin to fight to finish affair, and consequently heat up the polity. On the side of the people, they should shun those politicians displaying ill-gotten wealth knowing well that the money belongs to them, but being frequently siphoned by the opportune politicians. They should show self-respect for themselves and hold high their dignity by ignoring and showing disrespect to incompetent but wealthy office holders.

More transparent and effective screening methods must be developed by the political parties and the electoral body, to ensure the exclusion of politicians with overt or covert tendency to corrupt the electoral process and the electorate. There is also the need for political education of the electorate to be more discerning in their electoral choices, and minimize the pressures put on their elected representatives for financial and material rewards for voting.

Again, political parties should refrain from projecting the financial profile of the wealthy candidates and their financial importance to the parties. This is because such candidates have the tendency to want to live up to the image so created by injecting more money into the campaign than is morally justified.

Additionally, party officials should be trained on how to manage electioneering campaigns in which candidates have a well thought out manifestoes. Unlike in the second republic when major political parties clearly articulated their cardinal programmes, the case is not so in the fourth republic where voters are as confused as the politicians.

The mass media has a role to play in sensitizing voters to know their primary responsibilities in

electing credible candidates. For example, where the media is celebrating money-bags, who are using their wealth to subvert the democratic process and good governance, the phenomenon on money politics and vote-buying will continue to thrive in the Nigerian political scene.

Finally and much more importantly, the Nigerian economy must be improved upon to empower the people economically. This is because where poverty is reduced to the barest minimum; the electorates can then make independent electoral decisions in voting for credible politicians rather than incompetent but money spending politicians.

RESULTS (FINDINGS)

From the study, the following findings were observed:

- It was discovered that Nigerian wealthy politicians takes advantage of level of poverty and unemployment in the country to achieve their personal interest.
- It was also discovered that, Nigerians don't exhibit societal values anymore and that is why they are easily manipulated.
- It was discovered that corruption has eaten into the fabric nature of most Nigerians and that is why everyone is so money conscious and ready to do anything just because of money.
- It was also discovered that rule of law doesn't play out in Nigeria today.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The federal government and other stakeholders in governance can reduce poverty and unemployment in the country if only they can help execute the following below:
- Scrap NYSC scheme- once you are done with first degree, the government will subject you to two or three months mandatory skill acquisition programme. Then after that, you shall be paid the total money you would have received from National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) at ones to start up life as an employer instead of paying you the money monthly for period of 12 months and end up being unemployed at the end of your National service. It should also be applied to N power volunteers too.

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- The government at all levels should ensure that social values are restored in our society and make sure civic education is taught in schools all over the federation at least to avoid being manipulated.
- Corruption cannot be totally eradicated but the government can help to strengthen institutions fighting it and possibly re-orient the people on its effect in the society.
- A serious government should ensure that rule of law stands at all-time irrespective of who is involved and by so doing the people will build their trust on the government.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the causes, effects and management of money politics in Nigeria. From the study, we realized that there is need for the government to work aggressively and assiduously in making sure that rule of law stands in Nigeria. Once, this is achieved every other thing falls into place for good of all.

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