

An Assessment of Community Election Observers on Violence Preventions in Nassarawa Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study is aim at the assessment of Community Peace Observers (CPO's) on violence prevention in Nassarawa Local Government Area Kano State, Nigeria. The study is to examine the efforts and commitment of community peace observers both participants from international communities' observers on the prevention of violence in the area. Two objectives were set out, from which two research questions were raised in order to guide the conduct of the study.

Methodology: The research design adopted for the purpose of this research using both primary and secondary data. The data collection method has to do with review of related activities of the community election observers (CPO's) as secondary data and conducting interviews and administering of questionnaires to some selected 20 traditional, community and CBO's related with election management in Nassarawa local government, Kano state as a primary source of information.

Findings: The study has two major findings firstly, many political elites promotes youth election violence if they thought they cannot win election rather engage in peaceful and democratic means they choice to either rigging or destruct election processes through violence, secondly, lack of community concern over this attitudes of election violence has promote and escalate instances of election violence's in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The paper suggested that for election to be transparent and free from violence in Nigeria, there is need for our electoral laws to punish violators and sponsors of such bad conduct to be lesson to others and there is need for extensive community engagements towards managing election violence in Nassarawa Local Government, Kano State in particular and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Election Violence, Youth Violence, Community Election Observers, Free and Fair Elections.

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Introduction

Background of the study

Elections generally are conceived as a mechanism for peacefully resolving competition for political power and allowing for the popular choice of leaders. Yet throughout history, elections have triggered violence, particularly where the contest is seen as a winner-take-all or zero-sum venture. The passions stimulated by electoral competition and the grievances that often exist just below the surface particularly in countries with no or minimal democratic experience, or with severe political divides along religious or ethnic lines like Nigeria create a cauldron that can boil over with disastrous consequences (Obio, 2010).

At the same time, election-related violence, while a justifiably troubling phenomenon, need to be considered from the real-world perspective: violence in a conflict-affected countries like Nigeria is a year-long phenomenon, which may not necessarily increase during an election but a predominant factor that only trigger up during election period as a result ethnic and religious division from North to South dichotomy to Muslim/Christian relation may also be a trigger point for the generate conflict during election periods.

Electoral violence subverts basic standards for democratic elections. Violence against candidates, activists, journalists, voters, election officials and observers can reduce voters' choices and suppress the vote. Violence can be used to intimidate individuals and communities to vote against their will for a candidate. Assassinations of candidates can even change electoral outcomes. Armed groups seeking to overthrow a government often resort to violence during elections. In other cases, violence can break out when large numbers of people [protest] official election results. Not surprisingly, the term "election-related violence" has any number of definitions.

On May 29, 1999, Nigerians heaved a sigh of relief after the military relinquished power to the democratically elected government led by Olusegun Obasanjo, an ex-military ruler. From that time, Nigeria has enjoyed over 22 years of democratic rule albeit, with various episodes of violence ranging from agitation for independent Biafra in South East, the Niger Delta militancy to the Boko Haram Insurgency, kidnapping and banditry in some parts of Northern Nigeria (Albert, 2007).

A 2014 study prepared for the European Parliament emphasizes the relationship between election-related violence and power: Election-related violence is, most fundamentally, a form of political violence that aims to influence the conduct of an election, usually to influence its outcome. It is about power—holding it, winning it or protesting how it has been won and involves any use of force with the intent to cause harm or the threat to use force to harm persons or property involved in the electoral process (Abbas, 2010).

A 2017 paper by Sarah Birch and David Mulchinski reviews a half-dozen definitions before offering their own:

“coercive force, directed towards electoral actors and/ or objects, that occurs in the context of electoral competition.”

An even more recent study on the subject considers the following features as relevant to defining election-related violence: temporally close to elections, targeted against those involved in the electoral process, motivated by desire to influence electoral outcome, and a strategic tool used to influence political processes.

Jonas Claes and Inken von Borzyskowsk, has argued that election violence as an attitude that including any form of intimidation or physical violence directed against electoral stakeholders, the disruption of events or damage to materials, intended to affect an electoral process or influence the outcome.” Their definition of election violence prevention spans the measures “taken with the explicit aim of protecting electoral stakeholders, events, and materials; promoting an environment conducive to a peaceful election process; and addressing the risk of violence in a proactive and sustained manner.

Determining what constitutes “close to elections” is the subject of debate. Most data sets count only those acts that are related to the pre-election day preparations, such as voter registration, or that occur no more than three months after election day. The implications of such a cutoff are significant. For example, in 2007 and 2011 Nigerian elections was termed as violent by observers with rigged results and number of human casualty and massive destruction of properties (Gardon,2015)

Election observation, which has evolved dramatically during the past over twenty years of the return of democracy in Nigeria, is one of the international community’s principal tools to prevent election violence, although it is by no means a silver bullet. In some instances, a heavy observer presence on Election Day may shift violence to other phases of the process, and critical post-election observer statements may exacerbate tensions and stimulate violence. Consequently, considerable deliberation is required in planning a mission, framing the content, and determining the timing of public statements. Election observers’ ability to help prevent election violence is enhanced when the mission commits to a long-term and geographically targeted deployment in coordination with other credible international and domestic observer groups (Harwood, 2010).

However, quantifying the precise impact of the observers’ presence is difficult, complicating decisions to determine the appropriate investment in observation as opposed to other forms of electoral support. Consistent with their mandates, observer missions should play a proactive mediation role when violence appears imminent at the national and sub national levels, and should proactively encourage all competing parties to take affirmative steps to reduce tensions.

Even though election observers can play an important role in preventing violence, their deployment is not warranted where security conditions compromise their freedom of movement or place the observers at physical risk. This consideration particularly relevant where an armed actor seeks to prevent the occurrence of elections through repeated acts of violence directed at those participating in the process. This study was inspired by the quest to assess the contribution of the community peace observers in the area of violence prevention in Nassarawa Local Government area of Kano State. It is borne out of the desire to have a clear understanding and data on the need to have a viable early warning/early response reporting mechanism in Nassarawa Local Government of Kano State.

Nassarawa LGA was carved out of the old Kano Municipal LGA. Its current population is estimated 1.8 million. It is bounded by Ungogo to the northwest; Gezawa to the northeast, Kumbotso to the southeast; Tarauni to the south and Fagge to the west. Nassarawa LGA has 13 wards: Brigade, Badawa, Dakata, Gam, Giginyu, Gwagwarwa, Hotoro North, Hotoro South, aura Goje, Kawaji, Kawo, Tudun Murtala and Tudun Wada.

This LGA can be described as urban with a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-national population of Hausas, Fulanis, Yorubas, Arabs, Nigerians, Malians, Ghanaians and several other groups.

Nassarawa is a commercial centre with the following major markets: Gwagwarwa, Yankaba, Tudun Wada and Kasuwar Allah Sarki Situated respectively at bridge, off Hadejia Road, Tudun Wada Road and Dakata areas. There are also seven overnight parts located at Yan Kaba market. Yan Kaba motor park, Hotoro NNPC petrol tanser depot, Dan Marke, Dkaka market, Bompai road and Tudun Wada bus stop.

Several truck and bus companies operate from Nassarawa. More than 2000 trucks and buses leave the LGA for various destinations; about 1,200 trucks and buses remain there overnight. There are also many industries and construction companies, which together with the markets and transport businesses—generate substantial revenue for the LGA.

There is a substantial entertainment industry for both high income and ordinary persons in this LGA. Several cinemas, outdoor snooker club, clubs, hotels, bars and clubs. Nassarawa LGA can be divided into three demographic sub areas. The first covers Tudun Wada, Gwagwarwa, Dakata, Kawaji, Gama and some neighbouring wards; these are poor and densely populated. This sub-area has very few public facilities, but many privately run Quranic schools and mosques. The second division covers the

Government Reservation Area (GRA) Nassarawa and parts of Hotoro. This is a low-density sub-area with wide streets and generally cleaner environment than the first described above. The third sub-area includes Bompai, home too many industries. It is the oldest industrial estate in Kano State.

The heterogeneous nature of Nassarawa Local Government area where there are a lot of diversities in perceptions and different religions inclinations has been targeted as one of the areas to be covered by the activities of the Community Peace Observers (CPO's).

Community Peace Observers (CPO's) are personnel of the Mercy Corps to Implement Community Initiative to Promotes Peace (CIPP) responsible for active mitigations and management of conflict at the community level. It is an inclusive peace building strategy that deals with the early warning early response mechanisms at the community level.

Community Initiative to Promote Peace (CIPP) is a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to be implemented by Mercy Corps in Partnership with pastoral resolve (PARE), interfaith mediation centre (IMC), savannah centre for Diplomacy Democracy and Development (SCDDD) and the African Radio Drama Association (ARDA).

CIPP aim to promote peaceful coexistence and collaboration in Nigeria by mitigating violence conflicts in at-risk communities in six states in Nigeria north west (Kaduna, Kano, and Kastina) and North Central (Kogi, Benue and Plateau State) Areas. It is an integrated multifaceted programme that:

1. Empower communities to prevent and respond to violence and violent extremism by strengthening key skills and relationships.
2. Poster an enabling environment for peace through policy advocacy, media outreach and linkage to development programmes.

CIPP will also build the skills and relationship required for violence prone communities to mitigate and manage conflicts, resist rising violent extremism and proactive address the root cause of the conflict, it is guided by the theory that:

“If conflicting and or unalterable communities improve their skills in conflict management and mitigation and are able to identity the underlying recruitment factors and drivers of violent extremism and collaborate with government agencies and local leaders to address these issues, then violence in assisted communities will be reduced”
(Oluwgulu,2015)

Statement of the Problem

The history of elections in Nigeria, both before and after independence, is largely characterized by violence arising from wide spread acts of hooliganism and vandalism which often than not resulted into large scale destruction of lives and property. Available evidence from the works of scholars, including those of Post (1963), Sklar (1963), Mackintosh (1966), Post and Vickers (1973), Dudley (1973) and Joseph (1991) all confirm incidence of violence during the 1964 general elections as well as the 1965 Western Regional election, which also aided the collapse of the First Republic in 1966. The Second and aborted Third Republics also witnessed election related violence especially during the 1979, 1983 and 1993 general elections. (Joseph, 1991; Osaghae, 2002).

For many years, election-related violence has posed a serious threat to the integrity of electoral processes worldwide. To prevent or minimize such violence, the international community often has relied upon election observation, which incorporates by design an extended on-the-ground presence and proactive mediation by international and domestic actors. However, whether the mere presence of election observers prevents violence is debatable, even as expectations have continued to rise (Ogundiya, 2005).

All the six general elections conducted during the Fourth Republic in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 are known to have exhibited different levels of violent related cases (Nwolise, 2007; Ojo, 2007; Orji

and Uzordi, 2012; Awofeso and Odeyemi, 2014; Muheeb, 2015). While the 1999 and 2003 general elections were criticized by election observer groups on grounds of non-transparency, lack of accountability, intimidation of voters and conflict of different kinds; more violent related cases were recorded in the general elections that brought President Yar'Adua into office in 2007. More than previous elections during the Fourth Republic, the post electoral violence that followed the 2011 general elections was widely condemned for its widespread destruction of lives and property, especially in the Northern region. The 2015 general elections appear to be relatively more peaceful and credible, they were non-the-less totally devoid of violent related cases.

Needless to reiterate here, the effects of electoral violence on Nigeria's political image has been most damaging to the country's path to democratic consolidation (Adebisi and Loremikan, 2013).

Consequently, there are serious doubts from several quarters including the international community, on the ability of the country to conduct a free and fair election devoid of electoral malpractices, security lapses, and sustained by independent electoral body and judiciary. The suspiciousness that usually accompany the administration of a free and fair election by the electoral body in Nigeria, coupled with an aged long history of bias and manipulation of elections outcome by successive governments necessitated the introduction of an interventionist measure in form of election

Research Questions

The following questions were formed to guide the research work:

RQ 1: What causes election violence in Nigeria?

RQ 2: Does the activities of community observers can help in preventing election violence in Nigeria?

RQ 3: What are better ways of improving the activities of peace observers to fight the menace of election violence in Nigeria?

Research Objectives

The general objective of this paper is investigate the implication of election violence towards sustainable democracy in Nigeria and link it with effective role of community election observers in managing election violence before election, during and after elections with following specific goals:

- 1) To examine causes of election violence in Nigeria
- 2) To find out the relevance of community peace observers activities in preventing election violence in Nigeria.
- 3) To identify better way of supporting the activities community peace observers in order to fight the menace of election violence in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Elections

Elections form the bedrock of a genuine democratic system. Osumah and Aghemelo (2010) see election as a process through which the people choose their leaders and indicate their policies and programme preference and consequently invest a government with authority to rule. Roberts and Edwards (1991) cited in Omotola (2007) view election as a method of selecting persons to fill certain public offices through choices made by the electorate; those citizens who are qualified to vote under the laws and procedures of the electoral system. Webster's Encyclopedic dictionary (2006) defines election as "the act or process of organizing systematic (s) election (permitting mass participation and method of choosing a person or persons by vote for a public office position in which state authority is exercised".

Electoral Violence

According to Fisher, J (2010), electoral violence involves all forms of organized acts of threats aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder or opponent before, during and after an

election with an intention to determine, delay or influence a political process. ogundiya and Baba (2005), see electoral violence as all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping spontaneous or not, which

occur before, during and after elections. Fischer (2002) defines electoral violence (conflict) as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced “protection”, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination.

Similarly, Igbuzor (2010), sees electoral violence as: Any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities including, pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes.

The above definitions are the hallmarks of electoral violence in Nigeria’s fourth republic.

Electoral Security

Electoral Security is defined as “the process of protecting electoral stakeholders such as voters, candidates, poll workers, media, and observers, electoral information and campaign materials; electoral facilities such as polling stations and counting center and electoral events such as campaign rallies against death, damage, or disruption of the electoral processes (USAID). Furthermore, Fischer (2010), defined electoral security as “the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities or events.

Observation Groups

Although, an aged long practice in old nations and among developed countries, election observation is a more recent activities in Africa. In Nigeria for instance, the 1993 general elections were the first to be observed by election monitoring groups from within and outside the country. Ever since, subsequent elections in Nigeria, including the recently conducted general elections of 2019, were all under the close watch of several internal and international election observer groups. Also, INEC has progressively increased the number of accredited observers since 1993 to a total of 144, comprising of 116 domestic groups and 28 foreign bodies, that monitored the 2019 general elections. The primary responsibilities of Observer groups in an election are simply to watch and report, as well as recommend to the appropriate quarters and stakeholders on how to improve on the shortcomings so observed. The intention is to strengthen democratic practice in a country.

In Nigeria for instance, the electoral body, INEC clarifies in its guidelines what it considers the tasks of observer groups. These include observing or watching:

- (a) The legal and institutional framework
- (b) The electoral/political environment
- (c) Arrangements affecting the safety and security of election officials, voters and other participants;
- (d) Management of electoral logistics and distribution of electoral materials;
- (e) The integrity of the electoral preparations; including voter registration and voter education;
- (f) The degree of political competitiveness
- (g) The inclusiveness of the electoral system, civic education and the extent of citizen participation.
- (h) The extent of human right violations and election related violence
- (i) Evidence of any violence, intimidation, interference with private exercise of the franchise.
- (j) The professionalism of security agencies
- (k) The extent to which security has affected the participation of the people in the electoral process;
- (l) The conduct of the main institutions and agencies; do they act in a measured and responsible manner?
- (m) The integrity of the conduct of the poll, including voting, the count collation and declaration of result;
- (n) The resolution of electoral disputes (Adebisi and Loremikan, 2013).

The paper against the above background and lingering problems associated with monitoring elections and implementing observers' recommendations, analyses the 2019 general elections in Nassarawa Local Government Area in Kano state, Nigeria. These and other factors made it necessary to suggest the assessment of the role of the community peace observers in violence prevention in Nassarawa Local Government Area in Kano State it is also another avenue that will give a thorough assessment of the community peace observers in the area of early warning early response mechanism reporting it is worthwhile to note that reporting is very vital in the activities of the CPO's.

Community Peace Observers

Community Peace Observers (CPO's) are based line personnel of the community initiative to promote peace (CIPP) formed and trained to identify the early responses to relevant authorities to prevent breakout of violence or its escalation.

The Community Initiative to promote peace is a five year peace building programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aiming at preventing violent conflict in the most at risk communities across Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, Benue and Kano States in the Nigeria North West and Middle Belt Regions.

The community peace observer (CPO's) works as baseline personnel to promote and Implement the CIPP programme at the community level under the prime implementation and coordination of Mercy Cops Nigeria from 1st May, 2019 to 30th April 2024, ie an implementation period of five years. The Mercy Corps Nigeria is a branch of an International Humanitarian Organisation working in over 40 countries as a global team on the frontline of today's biggest crises to create a future of possibility where everyone can prosper. It is an organization with a mission to alleviate sufferings, poverty and oppression, by helping people build secure productive and just communities focusing on the following:

- Meeting urgent needs of people affected by election violence.
- Addressing not cause of election violence
- Supporting free and fair electoral processes
- Empowering youth
- Strengthening accountability and governance of electoral system

Mercy Corp Nigeria in partnership with pastoral Resolve (PARE) Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD) and the African Radio Drama Association (ARDA) are in collaboration for the implementation of the community initiative for promote peace (CIPP) in Nigeria.

The role of the community peace observers can be clearly reflected as baseline implementation of early warning and early responses mechanism (EWER).

Early Warning and Early Response (EWER)

Early warning has been defined by (OECD, 2009). As

- a. Alert decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent elections.
- b. Promote an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impact of election violence.

It involves the regular collection and analysis of data on election violence by systematically monitoring and reporting conflict indicators by generating products through qualitative and or qualitative methods.

This helps formulate scenarios and response options that are communicated to the decision makers, meaning the early warning systems are linked to response instrument.

While the early response (OECD, 2009) refers to any initiative that occurs as soon as the threat of potential election violence is identified and that aims to manage, resolve or prevent that violent conflict.

Sodipo (2014) Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems are critical elements that serves as a basis for peaceful elections . The scourge of violent conflicts in Nigeria has been growing since the country returned to civilian rule in 1999. Recent conflicts across Northern Nigeria particularly Kano is an example.

However, conflict prevention is possible if the stakeholders and policy makers are sensitive and responsive to early warning indicators.

Early Warning, Early Response (Ewer) Case Studies

Report (Early warming): CPAN Report Jan- March 2011 following the high tension over the stabbing to death of a young man by another among during presidential election in Gwagwarwa/ Tudun Wada Community in Nassarawa LGA of Kano State.

Response: (Early Response): CPOs prevented the tension over the attacking of some PDP agents at Yankaba from escalating into crises among the youths by calling on the security agencies and other community leaders for quick intervention and calm was restored.

Report (Early Warming): Community election Observers (CPOs) in Nassarawa LGA embark on advocacy visit to the District Head of Hotoro and the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) Hotoro Division, to strengthening election community stake holders support .

Response (Early Response): The visit paved way for possible collaboration to promote peaceful coexistence in the area where the leaders pledged their absolute support towards promoting peaceful election in 2015 and 2019 election in the area.

Tuesday Jan 17, 2019. Report: (Early Warming): The Community election Observer in Nassarawa LGA of Kano reported vote buying reports of possible destructio election process to security personnel's and the report has help in preventing election violence in various polling units in Nasarawa Local Government.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this discourse, this paper will rest on Karl Marx's dialectical materialism which gives vivid explanations on electoral violence in Nigeria. Karl Marx's dialectical materialism suits Nigeria's scenario. Abbas (2010) observed that dialectical materialism is premised on man's inherent motivations of economic pursuits and needs. Thus, man's fierce inclinations and struggles to acquire, control and maintain political power at all cost justify the choice of this theory. Therefore, the relations between the people in the production processes are symbiotically connected with the nature and direction of the political struggles to capture political power in order to determine economic factors. Furthermore, this assertion was supported by Dudley (1965 cited in Etannibi, 2004).

Dudley said that:

“The reality was that Nigerian politicians perceived politics and political office as investment and as an avenue for the acquisition of extra ordinary wealth (through corruption) which they think is not possible through other forms of legitimate vocation and enterprise. Thus, in Nigeria, the shortest cut to affluence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics...to be a member of the government party means open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the like”.

In a country where over 70 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty, politics is seen as an escape route from poverty. This is worsened by the high level of corruption among public office holders in Nigeria. Over the years, Nigerian politicians and other public office holders have promoted ostentatious lifestyles not been mindful of the sufferings of the Nigerian masses. One of Nigeria's brightest political scientists, Claude Ake (1964) asserted that: Those who win state power can have all the wealth they want even without working, while those who lose the struggle for state power cannot have security in the

wealth they have made even by hard work. The capture of state power inevitably becomes a matter of life and death.

That is one reason why our politics is so intense, anarchic and violent". Comparatively, it has been discovered that elected representatives of the people at the local, state and federal levels of government earn higher wages and allowances more than their counterparts in the developed countries. Hence, the struggle for political power through any means becomes inevitable in Nigeria's political space.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for the purpose of this research using both primary and secondary data. The data collection method has to do with review of related activities of the community election observers (CPO's) as secondary data and conducting interviews and administering of questionnaires to some selected 20 traditional, community and CBO's related with election management in Nassarawa local government, Kano state as a primary source of information.

Results

Table 1: *Bio Data of Respondents*

| S/N | Population Respond by wards | Frequency |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Hotoron Kudu | 4 |
| 2 | Giginyu | 4 |
| 3 | Kawaji | 4 |
| 4 | Gama | 4 |
| 5 | Tudun Wada | 4 |
| Total | | 20 |

Table 2: *Questions Administer*

| SN | Questions | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | Does community observes would help in ensuring quality election results in Nassarawa LGA, Kano State. | 17/ 20 | 85% |
| 2. | Does lack engaging community observers by electoral bodies affect the election integrity in Nassarawa LGA | 13/20 | 65% |
| 3. | Does political parties support the activities of community observers in Nassarawa LGA | 4/20 | 20% |
| 4. | Does community observers received functional training before election activities in Nassarawa LGA | 6/20 | 30% |
| 5. | Does community observers face challenges during election process in Nassarawa LGA. | 18/20 | 90% |
| 6. | Does problems of election observers can be solve by our electoral Acts or campaign for attitudinal change? | 9/20 | 45% |
| Total | | 20 | 100% |

The above indicated the responses of 20 peoples selected from various wards of Nassarawa LGA, Kano state, Nigeria to assess the roles community observers toward proving transparent and free and fair elections in Kano State in particular and Nigeria at large. Based on research conducted with 17 peoples

out of 20 respondents with a view that the role of community observers functions would help in providing functional election process in Nassarawa LGA, with 85%.

Secondly, 13 peoples out of the 20 peoples as population 65% agreed that lack of engaging community observers by electoral bodies has created a gap in providing functional election process in Nigeria.

Another issue highlighted was lack support by political parties in supporting the activities of community observers in Nassarawa LGA, has created a serious set-back with 4/20 that 20% has responded adequately.

However, 18/20 has 90% was of view that their numerous challenges faces by community observers in conducting their role during election observations. While 9/20 respondents are of view that electoral Acts and its real implementation can help in addressing the problems of election violence in Nassarawa, LGA, Kano State, Nigeria.

Major Findings

The research work has the following finding based on the data review and interview conducted to some selected community leaders, Community Based Organization (CBOs) security formations and media experts, we have this opinion: 1) No proper support from the local communities and other relevant stakeholders in supporting the activities of community election observers to prevent or manage election violence in Nasarawa Local Government in particular and Kano State in general. 2) There is no punishment from the election violators and their sponsors at various levels from ward, Local Government to state level because they are being protected by peoples in power or elders in the communities. 3) There is no functional training and retraining of community observers to meet international standard before and after election activities. 4) There was little or no any support from communities at grassroot level to ensure peaceful election in Nassarawa Local Government in particular and Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to review the trends in electoral violence in Nigeria. It identified the economic interests of politicians as the major force behind electoral violence in Nassarawa LGA, Kano State, Nigeria using Dialectical Materialism as its theoretical standpoint. The outcome of the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 polls in Nigeria has showcase the beginning of a new chapter of electoral violence in Nigerian political process, which need the input of community election observers in ensuring quality free and fair election in Nigeria in the coming 2023 election.

Recommendations

The paper has following suggestions for the country to have functional free and fair elections that could help to enhance true democratic process:

- 1) There is need for wider community and other stake holders mobilization on the importance of avoiding election violence at different levels
- 2) There is need to enact laws that could punish any violators of peaceful election in Nigeria no matter theirs status in the society.
- 3) There is need for functional training and retraining of community observers to meet international standard.
- 4) Community at grass root level need to ensure support for community local observers for the conduct of peaceful elections in Nigeria.

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Conflict of Interest

Author has no conflict of interest.

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