

Obasanjo and the Burden of Elections in Nigeria, 1999- 2007: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract

The widespread suspicion and outright rejection of electoral results on the nascent democracy and nation-building bear deep reflections. This was an indication of political problem on the general dissolution of the populace of Nigeria, a heterogeneous country. This study examines reasons for 'Umpire dilemma' in the conduct of elections under Obasanjo's administration; despite its good intention and humble bearing on the nascent democracy in Nigeria. But how this would be possible in the Abuja-Centred structure is the task of this study. Poor sense of history is one of the main causes of electoral malpractices in Nigeria, because citizenry failed to learn from the mistakes of the past on the conduct of elections, which make history to be repeating itself. To attain the aim of this study, analysis of historical data would be the conceptual framework.

Keywords: Obasanjo, burden, elections, nascent democracy, nation-building

Introduction

The study sets to give an overview of the history of elections and its conduct in Nigeria under President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration between 1999 and 2007. To achieve the central objective of this study; it makes a historical reflection of the past elections in Nigeria and their devastating effects on the Nigerian States. The major thrust of any civil administration in the society is to build a nation. Situating contemporary challenges within a context of the principles of democracy and its pursuance in Nigerian States, the study delves into the problems created by ethnic identities, chauvinism and nationalities, which artificially bound us together as a nation-state and not as a nation since the amalgamation of 1914.

Despite the blames of Nigerians on the amalgamation of 1914 and their failure to effectively run a nation in 51 years of independence, the study subsists to educate the political *elite* and the governance to return from internal colonisation of the people's political Will and heritage, but be inspired to promote good governance through the conduct of free and fair elections in Nigeria. The study shows that the problem of the conduct of elections in Nigeria can be related to cultural identity and nationality, which have constituted the burdens of elections.

In view of this problem, the study discusses the importance of good governance as the basic characteristic of fair elections and argues Nigerian *elite* to retrace their step and reiterate the relevance of the study of (the past) history in the society, because it is linking the past to the present and then projecting it to the future (Philipson and Adebo 1954: 49; Tony 2009: 18). So that history will not seemingly repeat itself as it were in the past, because Nigeria had made history to be part of comity of social integration for good governance that existed from one country to another.

The study demonstrates the purpose of studying history; not only in a State, but also its application by individuals in the society (Nigeria). In view of the purpose of history in the socio-political affairs of the society, the study is sub-divided into six parts. The first part introduces the study. The second part discusses the history of electoral fraud in Nigeria. The burden of elections under Obasanjo's administration is examined in the third section and for clarification; examples of manipulated elections in Osun, Sokoto and Ekiti States are selectively investigated as a result of grave electoral frauds that were committed and the maximum number of days in which (long-drawn judicial processes) to dispense with the petitions and cases, electoral matters and frauds.

The role of security agents, particularly the Police and the conduct of elections under Obasanjo's administration is also scrutinised. The fifth part analyses issues, challenges and prospect of elections in Nigeria, while the sixth part, concludes and provides recommendations for improving elections and voting system in Nigeria.

A History of Electoral Frauds in Nigeria

Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and for the past 53 years, after the political independence from Britain (Obaro 1985: 21), she had been battling with the principles of nationhood, which had not been achieved. This section reflects on Nigerian system of elections. For instance, the massively rigged General Election of 1965 in the Western Region by the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) headed by Chief S. L. Akintola and Chief Remi Fani-Kayode who inappropriately claimed that they believed in the principle of National Socialism (Osuntokun 2009a: 19). Apart from the election impasse of 1964 and the consequent break down of law and order in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the 1951 deflection that brought about Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's exit from the West was, unfortunately caused by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. In addition, to the historical background of electoral malpractices, in 1964, regional election, the National Council of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC) made more malpractice in Yorubaland and, by 1956; the NCNC defeated the Action Group (AG) of Western Region. But immediately the Action Group started tacit way in election rigging, ethnic politics began (Osuntokun 2009b: 19). The AG was seen as a Yoruba majority Party and there was the fundamental question of domination by the Yoruba majority Party and the actions of the Regional Government were directed towards obliterating the institution and culture of other political formations in the region. It is desirable to understand that there was no unity that has existed among the ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Nigeria. The benefits of oil exploration and exportation in Nigeria had been the cause of the relative unity we have in Nigeria (Otoide 2003: 105; Osuntokun 2011: 21).

It is on the basis of this argument that the study argues on the relevance of history on the burden of elections between 1999 and 2007 and its decisive effect on the task of nation- building.

Burden of Elections under Obasanjo's Administration, 1999 – 2007

This part discusses the role of politicians in the conduct of elections in Nigeria, particularly under Obasanjo's administration. This study finds the significance of the burden of elections under Obasanjo's administration as a historical process. And to crucify Obasanjo's administration is an attempt to reduce its "human face" to uniform order, which cannot be guaranteed because there were different individuals in the dynamic society.

The burden of elections under the reviewed period can be analysed from the concept of determinism in history and contingency of Nigeria's society. Determinism (Berlin 1968: 682) denotes that human actions are determined by external or extraneous forces, but in this context, it can be argued that nothing is extraordinary that had no precedent or happened differently (Carr 1961: 93). In other words, every individual chose and thus was responsible for some actions. Although, individual is morally and intellectually free to choose his action and range of choice is not unlimited. Consider the case of electoral scam in Nigeria; it was committed with impunity under Obasanjo's administration. In this manner, Obasanjo's essence contributed as an individual to the process of elections in Nigeria. Any attempt to attribute the reasons of the electoral malpractices to only the action of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the "Umpire" would be meaningless. There is ample evidence demonstrated in the study to claim that the political leaders and their agents had their faults. They took decisions and got many electorate guillotined, but they were not responsible for things that had happened before they began to act.

From the historical antecedent; the bye-product of the 1963 controversial census in Nigeria (David-West 2012: 51-52) and failure to consider the concept of determinism in history were prevailing circumstances of the root cause of electoral swindle in Nigeria. As a result, the burden of elections remained inevitable between 1999 and 2007, because history was manipulated and physically overpowered by those who seemingly had little or no choice than to make choice as institutionalised by the Abuja-Centred structure.

On this backdrop, there is no situation when human actions or decisions are exclusively based on free will. The claim that Obasanjo became a helpless victim of Providence cannot be sustained. The Obasanjo's choice of forceful elections was created by the past circumstances that were either created by him or by the "Umpire", but the choice is affected as determined by the intended aim of an individual, group of people and institutions. This is illustrated in the character of the individual, rather than being contextualised in the overall interest of the nation. Thus, Geyl observed that the past circumstances determined the future (Pieter 1972: 277).

In view of the above, the imperative task of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was to conduct free and fair elections, but indeed, the negligence of decency in the conduct of elections is irritating.

Its devastating effect is very germane on the bad democratic system as evident in bad leadership by rigging and re-run of elections in Nigeria. There had been burden of elections because of the imbalance of Nigerian nationhood. A nation is where the inhabitants are committed and even ready to pay the supreme price for the cause of their nation like in Britain and America (The Nation 2009; 56-57). The agenda of every ethnic group and nationality is different and, there was no serious and meaningful challenge given to elections under Obasanjo's administration, notwithstanding the fact that we are under democracy. The fact of democratic enthronement ought to have helped the electorate to be faithful. Unfortunately, they are not. It is a bit worrisome, when we consider the electioneering and litigations which followed.

The study is curious and tempted to investigate the intention of the PDP (ruling party) and its stakeholders to rule Nigeria. The ethnic loyalty of most people threatens the collectivity of Nigeria. Nigeria is a concept of virile State that made the founding fathers to forget their differences (David-West 2012: 52) to a large extent and this enabled them to fight for the Nigerian independence. The conception of building a democratic setting in Nigeria is available, but the practical aspect is not there. Democracy ought to be institutionised following the long-drawn military rule. That is, since the end of the military rule, democracy ought to be the golden time of Nigeria's history, but is still haunted the past elections' rigging 'legacy' bequeathed to the country by the founding fathers, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, even though none of them died a multi-millionaire (David-West 2012: 52). Election is meant to bring every national together. History is, therefore for those who care for the past, for the sake of the future.

The flagrant nature of elections during Obasanjo's administration to allow the PDP to continue in office was the bedrock of the bane of Nigeria's politics, apart from mismanagement and its evil form of corruption. President Olusegun Obasanjo and his cohorts needed to exemplify astute management of the electoral process. In addition to this, the idea of structural equilibrium through the creation of States was haphazard and such demand ought to be based on intellectual basis. Despite its subversion by socio-political, economic and ethno-religious contradictions, it was not welcomed by President Olusegun Obasanjo. Thus, Nigerians continued to be disenfranchised, especially the minority groups in towns like Ijebu-Ode, Ibadan to the South West, while in the South East, Adada, Njaba, Aba and Equity to the North; Katagum State from Bauchi State and New Bauchi State; Igala and Okun speaking people in Kogi State also asking for Okura and Apa State in Benue State and Savannah State from Borno State respectively. They claimed that because of the socio-economic and political imbalance between the southern, the northern and the central Borno accounted for the demand of new States. These towns are the examples of proposed States for creation, among others. These demands, taken altogether placed electoral problems over Obasanjo's administration. As a result of such electoral failure, it is not easy sustain democratic values in Nigeria; even the minority groups in the South-South were agitating for the creation of Ogoni and Ndokwa States.

Still on the creation of States, after independence, 12 states were created from the autonomous Regions, that is, the Western, Eastern and Northern. In 1963, the Mid-Western Region was carved out of the former Western Region. The agitation for the creation of States was degenerated due to the sharing of revenues accrued from the natural resources by the Federal Government (Osuntokun 2011: 21). In reality, agitation had been fulcrum on the goal of nation-building for politico-economic development. Prior to 1967, each of the regions had a constitution of their own, but there was a central constitution; wherein Section 140(1) states that; there shall be paid to by the federation to each region a sum equal to 50% of:

(a) the proceeds of any royalty received by the federation in respect of any minerals extracted in any regions and,
(b) any mining rents demand by the federation from within that region. However, with the dissolution of the region in 1967, the Federal Government became the sole appropriator and distributor of resources. A powerful centre emerged and the people began to see State creation as a way of having sense of belonging. More so, people felt to be fairly represented in their State. In response to the demand of better representation of every sub-ethnic and ethnic group in the federation of Nigeria, the Military regime under late General Murtala Mohammed subsequently created additional 7 new States (Ondo, Ogun, Benue, Bauchi, Kwara, Cross River and Imo) and Nigeria had 19 States. He relocated the Federal Capital Territory from Lagos to Abuja. In 1979, the Nigerian State returned to democracy, and its extension brought Olusegun Obasanjo back as a civilian President.

President Olusegun Obasanjo never listened to the creation of States as a civilian President, in spite of the people's agitation. His fear might, perhaps be the hurdles to pass the Bill at the National Assembly by the Joint Committee on Constitution Review, and the quest for State creation, was perhaps dependent on the amendment of the Constitution.

On this note, the enduring legacy of history on fiscal federalism (an euphemism for the current strident slogan of "resource control") also includes ethnic autonomy, fairness and equity in resources allocation and judicious management of natural resources are features of Nigerian State (Olaoye 2010: 23). The election was and is still disastrous in Nigeria because of rigging, and in that process, electoral reform is essentially becoming logistically impossible. Aside, it is necessary to make a descriptive data analysis of the most litigated elections of April 14, 2007 under the "Umpire" leadership and Chairman, Professor Maurice Iwu of the INEC. The reassessment of the elections in Osun, Sokoto and Ekiti States respectively are very germane for our understanding.

In Osun State, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) instituted petition against an alleged illegal results of the April 14 Elections and sought the court to nullify and void the election results with which Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola was declared as the winner. There were outstanding functional evidence and investigation on form EC8B (Exhibit 97 (1-11) discriminately signed by Alhaji S. O. A. Nofiu, a PDP chieftain in Ife Central, while in Odo-Otin, the same copies of EC 8A was blank and was not signed or even stamped by the presiding officers as required by the Electoral Act. As evidence in Ife East, Ife South, Ayedaade as well as in other parts of the remaining Local Government, a great deal of discrepancies were discovered where ballot papers were tendered and counted openly in the court. In the case of elections that were conducted in Osun State, record had it that multiple thumb printing was done in favour of Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola of the PDP. Subsequently, due to the differences and contradictions in Governor Oyinlola's electoral results, the results were cancelled in 10 Local Government Areas in Osun State. In Boripe, voters were disenfranchised. Thus, with the constitutional requirements of a quarter of votes cast in 2/3 of the Local Government, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola was declared the winner of the governorship elections. It has been found that the nullification of unlawful voters' results was not on the platter of gold, after about 20 months of legal battle at the Election Petition Tribunal (Agbiti 2010: 20; Williams 2002: 37).

Similarly, in Sokoto State, the dramatis personae were the INEC, Alhaji Aliyu Wamakko, the then occupant of the governorship seat of Sokoto State; Alhaji Muhammad Maigari Dingyadi, candidate for the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP), the Sokoto State Governorship and Legislative Houses Election Tribunal. Alhaji Wamakko contested for the governorship election in Sokoto State under the two platforms of the PDP and All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), his original party. Also, the same person without relinquishing his candidature of ANPP still flagged the PDP flag bearer without a running mate and due electoral process.

To INEC, the Electoral Act; the principal law created to regulate electoral matters in Nigeria was jettisoned by Professor Maurice Iwu, the INEC Chairman and Wamakko was declared winner of the election. Apart from criminality of choosing his running mate on April 27, 2007; 13 days after the poll, which clearly negated the relevant laws and practice. The Democratic People's Party (DPP) and Alhaji Dingyadi who was popularly favoured to emerge victorious became victims of the uncanny deceit. In the final verdict, it is highly regrettable that the supreme court and the National Judicial Council (NJC) that ought to be at the fore-front in the realisation of the social engineering role of law have with the greatest respect, not lived up to the expectation. This is injustice. Is this the wage of electoral malpractices?

In Ekiti State, there were anti-party activities and maladministration of the political leaders of each party that were allowed unchecked and unmitigated, which led to breakdown of public order and safety (Obasanjo 2006:3). The gruesome aspect was the compromised INEC Resident Commissioner, Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo on the electoral results between the PDP and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) candidates. INEC, the 'Umpire', had Siamese alliance with the PDP. Ballot boxes were snatched by thugs (The News 2009: 22). It was very disheartening that the result was declared and it devastated the enthroned stability, rule of law and democracy were compromised in Ekiti State under President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. The arson and killing in Ekiti State sent shivers down the spines of the people. It reminds the people of the Ajasin/Omoboriowo crisis of the Second Republic during which the people of the old State suffered considerably. In the same vein, during the PDP ruling in Ekiti State, there was no peace. During the struggle for party position in the year 2000, many lives were lost in the leadership tussle, for instance, between Chief Lawrence Agunbiade and Chief Joseph Ademuwagun. However, the two contestants were later removed from the chairmanship position (The Guardian Sunday 2002: 4).

Consequently, the state of emergency was declared by virtue of Section 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) and also published in a Federal Gazette to prevent further crisis after the undue process of impeaching Governor Ayo Fayose. Thus, the month of October was very crucial and significant month in Ekiti State.

The re-run elections between Governor Segun Oni and Dr. Kayode Fayemi led to the declaration of Governor Segun Oni, the winner of the governorship election. This culminated in the breach of law and order. In contrast, it was asserted by the Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG), that the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) won in the undisputed Councils with about 12000 votes, but the INEC was silent on the figures (Oladesu 2009: 4). Thus, under Obasanjo's administration, the law permitted sort of anomalies situation, when the sacred mandate of the people could be usurped just by anybody. Regardless of the fact that the Constitution that established INEC needs to be preserved.

Security Agents and the Conduct of Election in Nigeria

This part discusses the Police and other security agents, their role and challenges faced by them during the conduct of elections in Nigeria. Crime control is the nucleus of the duties of the Police in every society, but it had been a bitter experience conducting elections under the security watch of the Nigerian Police. The police, particularly since the enthronement of democracy in 1999, had lost its grip of maintaining law and order during the election process. The security agents with the law courts seemed to be helpless to some extent to bring electoral criminals to book. Though, some electoral criminals had been tried and sentenced. Surprisingly, the number is still abysmal compared to the gravity of the electoral offence committed (Williams 2002: 37).

The decay in the Police operations, like most other organisations in Nigeria, was simply alarmed, but the force should not be crucified entirely for the ineffectiveness. The paper has pointed out records of politically motivated violence erupting in one part of the country. Party members were killing themselves over nomination of the Local Government Election. Sometimes, supporters fought against themselves at the political rally (Bassey 2000: 11). In spite of the defense from the Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun, the 2003 General Election was not free and fair; law and order was a forgone conclusion in the case of the elections.

The bottom line of this paper is to reiterate that Nigeria failed to deliver in the conduct of elections of 2003 and 2007. This means that no election took place in Nigeria without violence (Williams and Ogbodo 2002: 37). A historical appreciation of the political evolution in Nigeria has shown that every election held in the past was characterised by unbridled partisanship. Thus, under Obasanjo's administration, the PDP was desperate with a passion to win and to prevail with a very large margin. To clarify the claim here, the PDP was, for example, more interested to unseat Governor Sani Ahmed Yerima in Zamfara State, but the PDP stalwarts found it difficult because of the Sharia law he had instituted around himself.

So far, the supporters of both the PDP and ANPP in the State routinely engaged themselves in scuffles; leading to loss of lives and property. This was not to explain that the Police did not embark upon pro-active measures, which enjoined the traditional rulers and opinion leaders to enlighten politicians to be tolerant with each other. Worst still, violence erupted in some local areas such as Okrika and Gokana during the primary elections conducted by the PDP for its local government chairmen and councilors (Williams 2002: 36). Usually, there were records of death and abduction of people. These happenings justified the claim of this paper that the Police was insensitive. Unarguably, the Police and other security agents, could not prevent perceived politically motivated killings in Nigerian States (Williams 2002: 36). This was a stage that prepared the ground for political violence and thuggery. There were stories of arms build-up in the various States of the Federation by politicians in preparation for the elections in the country (Williams 2002: 36).

Under Obasanjo's administration, it was a trite knowledge that what we had was not a democracy which can influence nation-building. Democracy and building-nation are demanding concepts and even the practice of democracy. In the narrow sense of its application and pursuance in Nigeria, it was and is still annoying, how the supposedly custodian of law and order conducted the kind of elections in Nigeria, that would keep soldiers away.

Again, the re-run election of April 25, 2009, in Ekiti State, the INEC Chairman, Professor Maurice Iwu called for soldiers. He claimed that he wanted to use the soldiers for ensuring the security of electoral materials and to also prevent break down of law and order at the polls (Ogunrole insert Year: 1).

In State like Cross River, the facilities and apparatuses of the State were used to harass the people in exercising their constitutional rights to vote for candidate(s) of their choice. Unfortunately, the judicial system which was the last survival of democracy was not independent of both the Executive and the Legislature. There were contradictions and the Parliament cannot be considered as elected one. In that instance, there was indication that results were sometimes ready before the commencement of voting Ogunrole : 1).

Elections: Issues, Challenges and Prospects

Election is a process and not an event, but it is a myth to assume that no country can develop without free and fair elections for desirable ideal democracy. The conduct of elections under Obasanjo's administration as the elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria undoubtedly was a military arrangement. This explains the paradox of a eight- year civil rule, which internalised the ethos of impunity and dictatorship rather than suavity and civility that promote and protect democratic ethos. His style of administration over the conduct of elections during his government was gruff and flippant. He, as an administrator, barely disguised his contempt for democratic finesse in the way and manner he pursued electioneering.

To him, the elections were do or die affairs for his Party affiliation, the People Democratic Party (PDP) to win every election. In his much vilified administration, he bequeathed to Nigeria an institutionalised electoral banditry, a grand heist in the April 2007 General Elections. Since then, Nigeria has been faced with the grim prospect of a democracy without a sound electoral system. It is, therefore, a challenge for and prospect of democracy in Nigeria to be humane and not allow it to be a contingent or burden in as much that democracy is a *continuum*.

Since 2007, due to the institutionalised elections in Nigeria, holding free and fair elections had been one of the greatest challenges and threats to the Fourth Republic. President Olusegun Obasanjo's legacy on political platform is what this paper succinctly described as sheer electoral (Williams 2007). To correct rigged elections, to some extent, the courts have, of course tried their best. But from the recent experience in Ekiti, Sokoto and Osun States and the other court-ordered re-run elections under Obasanjo's administration, obviously indicated that there was a limit to which the court can help. That is why, sweeping electoral reforms are very necessary.

Nigeria returned to civil rule on May 29, 1999 and held three general elections, aside from the re-run elections and the Local Government polls. Of the three General Elections, none of them met the international standard of free and fair polling. Even, the 1999 elections under the direction of the late Chief Ephraim Akpata, which appeared to be the fairest of the three elections, were not totally free of court injunctions by the opposition Parties. It is still very disheartening to note that each of the election was worse than the preceding ones. For instance, it can be claimed that 2003 was worse than 1999, 2007 was worse than 2003, and each succeeding electoral 'Umpire' was also worse, particularly under the tenure of Professor Maurice Iwu, who succeeded Dr Abel Guobadia, the INEC Chairman during Obasanjo's administration.

Professor Maurice Iwu, the INEC Chairman broke all the bounds in how not to conduct elections in a civil society. However, he was an instrument of opportunity and a tool that was used to snatch power. He was not specific, even as a Professor of psychology, about how the corporate existence of Nigeria should be maintained was his dramatic and sordid example, which he showed in the conduct of the Ekiti re-run Governorship elections. The drama and the controversy that surrounded the final results were also in shamble, as a result of the shady deeds, which followed INEC's conduct. Indeed, as of today, the Nigerian State has mainly experienced transit democracy. Its initiation and survival wholly depend on the political "actors" at the corridor of power, because democracy is a kind of follow-up elections that usually bring the kind of civilian rule we have had in Nigeria. And if it goes unchecked, it may bring the civilian rule to an abrupt end (Tinubu 2009: 40), because the terms of voting and rights of counting portray equity and justice; there may not be better conduct of election in the country.

This situation of conducting elections in Nigeria under Obasanjo's civilian administration came into being as a result of the neglect of history. The mistakes of 1956 and 1957, and that of 1963 were repetition of history (past events). Thus, the political *elite* and the electorate should be checkmated through the provision of electoral laws if history is not to repeat itself.

There is very little prospect for transition to democracy if the crucial problems and challenges raised in this paper are not addressed as a matter of urgency.

Democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for desire of the people may be cruel if elections are not freely and fairly conducted, so as to help the polity modernise itself and subsequently beam a searchlight on the conduct of judicial officers. The Election Petition Tribunals must hear and rule on every case of electoral fraud in its merit, and not presumably rejected on technical grounds.

The judiciary panders on the lawlessness of the Executives. It is, however, difficult to find justice in such circumstances, and certainly impossible to sustain democracy. This was the prevalent situation during Obasanjo's rule and with this development; the quest for nation-building cannot be possible. Due to the crises of due process in the law courts, electoral process and the bureaucracy Government was mainly interested in enforcing due process. It may be possible to have democracy in Nigeria and build a virile nation if democratic structures are transparent. In view of this restoration, things may begin to work well.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In the last 51 years Nigeria has not had any election that was not subject of disputation, challenge and rather for the situation to be improved, it is getting worse. There were malpractices at all levels of the balloting process such as bribery of INEC auxiliary staff to engage in multiple ballots – thumb printing, purchase votes on voting queues, intimidation of opposition agents at the collation centres. Perhaps as early argued, one of the reasons is the structural imbalance in the country in which the government for long was located in one part of the country to the detriment of the free access to power by others no matter how qualified and talented they may be. Elections since 1951 to the present have not been able to foster a feeling of common destiny and if we are to remain together we must find ways and means to harmonise individuals and group rights within an over arching federal architecture. But the key to the removal of the burdens of elections lies in education, adoption of full proof technological electoral machines to minimise tampering with the electoral process.

The youths should be empowered, because dissolution of the federation will not guarantee fair election in the successor States. This is the experience and the verdict of history. The chaos in Somalia proves that common ethnic and religious identity is not a guarantee of stability, security, democracy and free elections. What is necessary is political restructuring of Nigeria, so as to have States, that is, perhaps base on the present six Zones and de-emphasising the centre in order to discourage struggle for the seizure of centre by rigging of election (Osuntokun 2011: 21).

It is, therefore, urgent to reform and reconstitute INEC, the umpire of the Abuja-structured elections in Nigeria. As a challenge, elections are prospective on the building of Nigerian nationhood. Electoral reforms and transparency for the electioneering is needed for the nation building (Anofi 2009: 1-2). History is not the study of the past, because it is a continuous process into the future. This study does not support impossibility in the objective of individual or to build a nation, because 'history' knows nothing or tenaciously hold onto fortuitous or unexpected, as argued by M. Odkeshott (Odkeshott:206). However, political leaders like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, among others had since Nigeria's independence be remembered by history as a subject. History knows and remarks the face and name of each person.

The Nigerian politicians should know that they should be more than a passage on the history of Nigeria's politics, but to recognise and accept that history will not vindicate them of their achievements, either good or bad. The records of the political culture and Will should also not be lost as we shall remain in our homeland. In history, there is nothing extra-ordinary, unlike in natural science. No accidental events because in the scientific sense, there are not inevitable events. For this, the Nigerian political leaders need to recourse back to history, so as not to create contingency in the conduct of elections in Nigeria, because failure could only retard or accelerate historical events. Thus, mistakes, over-ambition, by implication could not radically alter the cause of historical event.

So far, the study has pointed out that the wages of electoral malpractices cannot be over-emphasised. The conduct of elections prompted this thesis, and the study clearly concluded that Obasanjo's attempt and conduct of election during his administration certainly led Nigeria and still leading Nigeria into the abyss and democracy into a dungeon for he allowed elections to be monitored and supervised by the INEC Chairman, Professor Maurice Iwu in a robbery manner. On a final note, the study therefore drew conclusion that to enjoy sustainable electoral system in Nigeria, there should be recourse to events in the past and make a retrial explanation of them, which may serve as a guide in the future for nation-building. Thus, the Nigerian leadership is in the habit of fighting with the past rather than fighting the past.

Specifically, in the case of Nigeria, the task of nation-building is a reflection on the past. The Nigerian political *elite* and leaders should pay attention to the past and its relevance in the contemporary times, because the concept of history is about social change and impact brought about by scientific and technological progress that is determined by change. In other words, the burden (relevance) of history, according to Richard Adeboye Olaniyan, *is that history is about change* (Olaniyan 1996: 3). The political leaders, bureaucrats and the progressive elements should attempt to be identified with the past event and used its knowledge to enlighten the election swindlers in Nigeria and also be constrained in the choice and pattern of behaviours (Olaniyan 1996: 2, 4-5).

The necessity of overhauling Police in order to provide peace and social order in the electoral system, the Police should collaborate with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at joint workshops, which was mainly mounted to educate both Police force and the 'Umpire' on their respective duties and responsibilities during elections Williams 2002: 37). However, the Police claimed to build confidence of not conspiring or conniving with one party against the other. Even State Governors like Governor Donald Duke in Cross River State demonstrated and offered assistance to the Police as a way of supporting law enforcement activities in his State.

Reflecting on the judicial processes of handling election matters, the judiciary should learn its lesson of discouraging the issue of front-loading in filing petition. Obviously, complexity (ies) in the judiciary should be simplified and cases be dealt with expeditiously; so as not to give any opportunity to commit injustice in election petitions.

No doubt, elections were not properly done in Nigeria during Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. Thus, the Nigeria's Constitution should be amended to tackle electoral deficits, so that elections need to be fairly conducted. The political *elite* and their sponsors in Nigeria should improve upon electoral matters to achieving level of dividends of democracy. This is one of the basic ways Nigeria could enjoy fairest elections and good democracy that can lead to the attainment of nationhood.

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