

Political Elites and youth Exploitation in northern Nigeria: A case study of Kalare youth in Gombe state

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Introduction

Youth in African constitutes more than half of the African populations with about 60% but they are highly infected by the problems of unemployment, under employment, lack of skills and relevant education (African Youth Union, 2014). However, efforts were made by the African charter, where political and legal frame work for action was drafted so as to address the current situation of the youth in Africa. But yet this greater number of the African population lacks the opportunities to develop their innate potentials and contributes to the realization of the vision and mission of African leaders. This vision is aim at incorporating the youth as partners in decision making towards nation building, of which Nigeria is one of the member states toward the realization of those goals. However, scholarly studies and various reports has shown that Nigerian society has become prone to the used of youths as canon powder for pre-election, election and post-election violence in the country (Umar, 2003; Watch, 2007; Amnesty, 2008; Mbaya, 2013). But the question is that how true is these statements by the above writers? Is it really true that the youth are being used? And if they are, to what extend? It is at this background this paper examine the relationship between group of youth known as *Kalare* and political elites in Gombe state.

Methodology

For the purpose this study the researcher uses qualitative methods through an in depth interview with 27 *Kalare* youths who are victims of the exploitation of the political elites in Gombe metropolitan; where the violence and exploitation of the *Kalare* youth are more pronounce in the state. The respondents were reached through snow balling after the identification of a key informant. The in depth interview gave the *Kalare* youths the opportunity to explains their experience their relationship with the political elites in Gombe state in north eastern Nigeria. While, Secondary data was also drawn from newspapers, Organizational reports, Journals and publications were reviewed.

Major Findings of the research

The research revealed that the political elites were exposed to the exploitation of the political elites this is because before elections, the political elites patronize the youth. In other words they go into agreement that after the political elites is voted into office an employment will be provided to the youth. This was reveal by the respondent where he stated that:

They tell you that after I won the election I will find a good job for you. But you have help them work for their victory you will not see them again they will change their phone numbers; you will be left with the little amount he gave you during campaign and elections, Interview 2015.

When the research asked why do you think they abandon you? “Most of the respondent said that: *because they don’t look for you again until next elections when they will need your support*”. While some of the respondent has this to say; “*Because they have achieved their political goals*”. While a good number of the respondent reported that; “*the political elites claimed to have paid us*” This means the political elites are exploiting the youth because they are redundant as they lack skills and employment as such they became easy prey for the political elites to exploit as maintain by (Umar, 2003).

The effects of the political elite’s exploitation on the youths

The exploitation of the youth by the political elites has so many effects. Apart from the effects on the generality of the society it has reverse effects on the youths, as it was uncovered through the interviews with the youths. These are: socio cultural and physical effects.

I may interest the reader to know that more than half this youth are between the ages of 21-25 years old. These group are supposed to engage in training and re training through various institutions of learning so as to prepare them for the future challenges of life as the future leaders Wilmot (1980). But instead these youth are being exploited because of their poor background.

Discussion

Base on the data collected and analyzed and the previous studies by other researchers this research was able to understands that the political elite’s instead addressing the phenomena of you unemployment so as to reduce the redundancy of the youth, they political see empowering

the youth as big gap which will be difficult for them to fill. Particularly, when it comes to elections they may not have those to work for them. This may not be unconnected with the fact that poverty is still largely one of the Nigerian problems, and Gombe being the list when it's comes to federal allocation. Despite that, Gombe has a large numbers of unemployed youth in the state, couples with how the political elites are not ready to accepted elections defeats honourably as such the youth easily became susceptible to negative manipulation and exploitations especially during elections (Omotola, 2008; Yadudu,2008).

This argument can further be supported by Hollander, (2008). Where he hold that political elite's and states officials around the world uses violence to achieve political goals. Thus, many individuals and political elites believed that, their political aspirations and demands cannot be achieved without the use of youth for political violence.

Conclusion and recommendation

Base on the on the data generated and analyzed, the study conclude that two reason are mainly the contributing factors for exploitative relationships between the youth and the political elites. Firstly, the political elites are not ready to accept defeat honourably, as such they will continue to exploiting the youth for their selfish interest. Secondly, the youth are highly plunged with problem of unemployment's such that any opportunity that will ease them from being redundant they will grasp it. As such the study recommends that until the policies and programs that are mainly aimed at integrating the youth should be fully implemented. The non-implementation of those programs will further expose the youth to the traps of the political elites. All the opportunities deserved by the youth should be made accessible to enable the youth to be a partner in decision makings particularly on issues to do with the youths. Scholarship and vocational trainings for the youth should be given the deserve priorities. Finally, all laws if any that is meant to check the use of violence by the political elites should be strengthen and if none, the parliament should come up with a law that prohibits the use of youth as political vanguards with a strict penalties.

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