The use of ICT in the promotion of security in Nigerian politics

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Abstract

The discourse is premised on the assumption that ICT can be used as a method to engender security in politics and ginger the body polity into the democratic ideal. This will lead to peace in the society and an enabling environment for national development. Democratic ideal is an entity aspired to by most civilized countries as it can polish the politics and governance and ensure fairness and inclusiveness, thus paving the way for peace and development. ICT is an inevitable status we must all acquire in the modern world to facilitate the democratic process. Security is a sine qua non for development to occur and without which people cannot function optimally. Ensuring security in politics facilitates the process of governance and prods the nation towards the achievement of democratic ideals. Adult education can also be the enabler for the smooth transition in the world of technology and as a tool to unify the populace and ensure progress.

Key Words: Political Security, Democratic Ideals, Nigerian Politics, Method, ICT, Adult Education

Introduction

Man is a political animal and every society is arranged and governed by some form of politics or the other. The political history in Nigeria has been severally based on borrowed traditions from both the United States of America as well as that of Great Britain. Democracy is a process of governance traditionally, of the people, for the people by the people. It is supposed to help maintain a balancing mechanism that gives the power and freedom to the people to speak, choose and participate in their own governance. The epitome of democracy is that the government recognizes that the people have the say, and that it is ready to abide by this authority as stated in the law. Embedded in this are democratic ideals which people aspire to.

Promoting Democratic Ideals

Democracy is the system of inclusive government that allows the participation of the entire eligible citizenry to contribute to governance through mutually accepted elected representatives. Democracy is a world-preferred form of government due to its inherent fairness and seemingly just and egalitarian qualities. In an ideal republican government, the goals of democracy would include the upholding of individual rights, rule of law, common good, justice, equality and suffrage among other ideals. A democratic ideal, as used for purposes of persuasion between

what is and what ought to be, is indicative of qualities or standards thought to be necessary to the adoption and continuity of a democratic policy shown through the stance of government. Elements of the democratic ideal include good governance, security, fairness and justice and the rule of law. A key cornerstone of democratic ideal is the rule of law. Those in power must be held accountable for their actions and this is achieved by electing choice people to offices.

Annan (2004) proclaimed that the "rule of law" refers to:

a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency"

This encapsulates the democratic ideal. The proclaimed elements are however the missing link within the political system currently in Nigeria. The practice of proper democracy should positively affect the citizenry by uplifting the social status. Good governance should manifest in participatory politics, free and fair elections, solid infrastructure, along with the equitable distribution of resources to the people, all of which will further translate into security. Responsible governance will boost development when security is established. People are supposed to be invested and participate in the decision making process on issues that concern them and their lives; democracy allows for this, but it must be practiced conscientiously, fairly and transparently. Elections in Nigeria have so far used the traditional paper and manual voting and if she is to transition into the new century and comply with the global trend, she will inevitably have to incorporate technology into her entire system of operations.

Use of ICT

ICT (information and communication technology) is about enhancing communication processes with the use of technology. Humans need to interact all the time and have used different means of communication before, but technology has radically altered this dynamic and we now utilize it in virtually every facet of our lives including business, social, education and also politics. In the world today, ICT permeates all levels of societies and affects the process of development. It is therefore incumbent on any government to ensure that ICT is embraced in all its spheres of operation, politics included. Since information exchange remains a viable currency in human activities, it was inevitable that a faster, cheaper and more effective method will be found to manage and disseminate such communication processes by using technology. ICT involves computer hardware and software use, along with connectivity, to process and display information. The gradual introduction of various types of electronic resources into election processes is believed to have negated the practice of stealing of ballot boxes, ballot stuffing, and result alteration, among others. However, as long as computers deal with input, processing and output, and input is done by humans, technology will still be susceptible to manipulations. The mathematical aspect of it can be assured with least computer errors, so can the processing but problems can occur in other areas like computer malfunction, electricity issues among others. One of the perennial challenges in Nigerian politics to date is the lack of credible database of eligible voters, in spite of several efforts. ICT can help ensure that this fundamental necessity of a comprehensive voters register is addressed.

Arugu and Chigozie (2016) posit that ICT can be utilized to strengthen the political process, especially with the right public awareness, mobilization and sensitization activities. ICT can be used in the political terrain in different ways. The computer, for example, can be used in distributing, voting, collecting, counting and displaying votes. The commonest use is to deploy it for electronic voting (e-voting). E-voting can be partial or total automaton, using internet services to transmit tabulated results, or for full online voting (or combined with paper) for the vote input, recording, encryption and transmission to servers, as well as the tabulation of election results. Good e-voting must do all these while complying with established standards by the regulatory bodies. It must be secure, accurate, fast, private, accessible, effective and trustworthy. It can either be managed by government representatives or independent electoral officials. It can also be remote e-voting through the internet (i-voting) where votes are submitted electronically from any location and can be all inclusive to accommodate disabled voters as well. Overall, evoting can boost voter confidence and has been implemented in most of the developed nations of the world. It reduces cost of paper printing as well as required personnel, along with enabling ease of participation which results in greater participation by citizens in the democratic process. It is also fast, secure and reduces human error. Voters incidentally also do not have to wait for election results as it is instantaneous. It ultimately strengthens voters trust and privacy. ICT can

equally be used to provide information about the government and the political process through information gathering and dissemination on appropriate websites; can be used to campaign, enhance communication between the voters and elected representatives, but ultimately, technology is preferably used for electorates to cast their vote through electronic voting to make for ease, less pressure, fairness and voter satisfaction.

ICT use in politics in Nigeria however faces several challenges. Thus far several steps have been taken to introduce technology into Nigerian politics. Ayeni and Esan (2018) enumerated the Smart Card Reader (SCR), automatic fingerprint identification system (AFIS), electronic voters register (EVR) etc. All these were to reduce electoral malpractices to the minimum. However, impediments currently include access to the technology, as well as the knowledge of ICT as opined by the Electoral Commission (2003). This leaves a fertile ground for voter's education to help improve the speed and efficiency of the electoral process.

Generally, people have been found, across board, to be wary of technology use, sometimes bordering on technophobia. Major drawbacks to ICT in Nigerian politics were again enumerated by Yun and Openheim (2010) as a result of polls conducted in Delta State in the South. They found that lack of basic education and ICT skills ranked high in the polls, along with power blackouts, interconnectivity problems as well as high cost of equipment. One could add other issues like voters' apathy, poverty, lack of balanced access to ICTs (more familiarity and access in the southern states and scant contact with ICT in the northern states), and resignation to fate. Nura (2008) found similar constraints with ICT use in the Northern part of Nigeria, further compounded by language problems. There were also the usual rural/urban digital divides. Other issues centre around technophobia, which exacerbates the problem of electronic voting as it seems to be limited to the literate public and the elite. Other issues include computer malfunction (glitch) and computer errors. Currently, most technologies are imported. But it has been argued that if we did not manufacture the machine may be 'suspect'. The Americans for example, recently discovered that some extra chips were included in the technologies imported from China. This leaves nations vulnerable to the whims and caprices of the manufacturer who can tamper with or manipulate the technology.

There have been varied responses to the use of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) in countries around the world. Some have tried and discontinued while some are still testing it. They are currently being used in 20 countries around the world according to the National Democratic Institute (2013). However, most countries in the developed world already use ICT fully in their electoral processes. In Africa, Namibia premiered the use of ICT for voting and Nigeria has dabbled. Thus far, Nigeria has imported technologies for use in the political arena, mostly from China. There is need to master the technological know-how and teach the people how to use the technology for political purposes. There is always the need to adapt ICTs to the local conditions.

If ICT is to succeed in Nigerian politics, a lot still needs to be done. Adult education can be the beginning and the end of all that is needed, first to sensitize the populace, then to train them to use and eventually trust the technology. The training obviously begins with the necessary personnel and technicians. There is also the need to ensure adequate infrastructure. Currently, the lack of full supply of electricity hampers the use of most technology. This is magnified by connectivity issues, not to mention the supply of enough machines for use. The fact that technologies are imported makes us vulnerable to foreign manipulation. This means we must ultimately think of home-grown technology or adapting technology to suit local purposes. The government must thus begin by planning for enough resources - financial and physical to make technology work. As we strive towards the democratic ideal in our body polity adult education can help us achieve our goals quicker by embracing technology and ultimately ensuring security which will in turn facilitate national development.

Nigerian Politics

While politics may broadly be seen as how people are governed, the process of electing representatives into governance has been prone to various shenanigans that are contrary to the democratic ideal. Nigeria celebrates her independence from colonial masters on the 1st of October annually from 1960. This served as an antecedent to democracy in the nation. Nigeria currently practices a democratic system of government (as a Federal Presidential Republic) with executive power residing on the president as the head of government and over a multi-party system. Nigeria operates the Presidential system of government with the help of the Executive,

Legislative and Judiciary tripartite complementary arms. Oparah (2017) quotes the definition of politics by Harold Lasswell an American political scientist as the 'who gets what, when and how?' If this is how politics is practiced in Nigeria, it can be surmised that this decision will leave a huge opening for all kinds of intervening variables in the decision making process. Sections 14(1)(2)(a-b) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria states that:

- 1. The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principle of democracy and social justice.
- 2. It is hereby, accordingly, declared that:
 - a. Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government, through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority;
 - b. The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, and
 - c. the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution

This demonstrates what is encapsulated in the politically ideal situation. Musa (2018) however laments that Nigeria is getting to the state where it is practicing democracy devoid of democrats as the people become more and more disenfranchised by their circumstances as well as the perfidy and insincerity of leaders. This defeats a fundamental tenet of democratic ideal of defense and promotion of the people's interests as well as their freedom to choose their leaders. He further decries the inability of the ruling class to build the strong and stable social system and atmosphere necessary for democracy to germinate. Odekunle (2013) equally commented that "the electoral process itself has become usually tainted with observable manipulations and in some cases, heart-rending violence with able-bodied youths 'employed as armed thugs, the postelection violence of 2011 being a most calamitous instance". The 'do or die' syndrome and winner-take all phenomena serve as springboards for resistance and violence situations. Executive impunity is the order of the day with scant disregard for the rule of law. Citizens are cynical about the upcoming elections and the government's ability to deliver a quality, seamless and honest election with the scant infrastructure in place to conduct a free and fair election, starting with the ineptitude with which the voter's card has been handled so far. All of these beg the question of how security is handled within the politics, especially voter security, security of lives and property and security of the votes. Democratic ideals cannot be maintained if security is not ensured and used as an enabling environment for democracy to flourish.

Regrettably, instead of maintaining political ideals that will strengthen democratic practices in the nation, there have been contrary situations that threaten security in the country and are opposed to democratic ideals; issues of militancy, sharp electoral practices, kidnapping, corruption and other like vices. Instead. the politics is beset with unwholesome practices like violence, selfishness, money politics, thuggery, all exacerbated by poor ability to actually manage government and its administration when in office as exhibited through the blatant lack of accountability, according to Dara (2018). Leadership has thus been blamed for many of the current problems faced in Nigeria. The government is expected to ensure security through the provision of food security along with security of lives and property as well as voter security, which have all seem to be a mirage so far.

Over the years Nigeria has transitioned from manual writing of names since 1999 to the selective use of ICT in 2007 that included use of the direct data capture machine (DDCM). By 2015, the (AFIS) and the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) voters identification system (IVAS), to the use of temporary voters cards (TVCs) that were introduced in 2011 before the permanent voters' cards (PVCs). e-democracy can help with political stability. It is however dependent on the level of ICT deployed. Election history in different states in Nigeria has been characterized by violence. When votes are not handled securely, it can lead to electoral violence and dampen spirits, especially when electorates do not feel secure in physically casting their votes because of thuggery, threats, bribery and manipulation. All these divert attention from the basic political administration and governance, thereby threatening the political ideal. The political ideal is manifested in probity, better governance, transparency, accountability and participation.

The world is becoming such a global village that what affects a country can quickly spread to others, so it is necessary to cooperate and not ignore security challenges in a particular country as it can wind up affecting the next in different ways. Information communication is pervasive nowadays and there is no escaping. Even reluctant adult learners are being drawn into it, ready or not. They use electronic gadgets of all sorts, ranging from ATM, computers, smart phones on a daily basis. The way we learn, conduct business or interact daily have thus been elevated to more sophisticated levels. Transactions are now faster, cheaper, more efficient, to mention a few, rendering the world more of a global village. However, many are feeling left out in the

technological revolution that is hitting the noughties, especially the adult who may be reluctant to change with the times. Anderson and Perrin (2017) reported that around 42% of adults aged 65 and older in South Africa now report owning smartphones, up from just 18% in 2013. However, more than a third of adults are still technophobes according to studies (Anderson and Perrin, 2017; Rosen, 2017; Bakare, 2015). Another report noted that up to 85-90% of new employees in organizations may be uncomfortable with new technology. All these are carried on to the political arena where entire countries still prove to be reticent about technology use, especially in politics. Politics as currently practiced in Nigeria has had to obey the call of modern times by incorporating ICT into the way politics is practiced. This is because people are still getting acquainted with the all-pervasive technologies in all aspects of their daily lives makes adult education even more relevant to the adoption and familiarization of citizens into the e-voting system. All these will ensure security and promote national development. The national assembly is still debating whether to fully enact the new electoral act for the use of the electronic voting machines (EVMs), which are ICT or computerized voting system, for the upcoming 2019 general elections. The Nigerian Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has started with the electronic card reader but is yet to advance to full ICT deployment. Rosen (2017) recognized three subcategories of technophobes (the uncomfortable users, cognitive computerphobes as well as the anxious computerphobes. The more complex technologies become, the higher the anxiety level of technophobes. This may also vary from country to country, where the more developed could have a lower figure of technophobes.

Many countries around the world use some form of ICT or the other to conduct their elections. Namibia was the first African country to try e-voting. Kenya is on and so is Nigeria. In the countries in Africa where is has been successfully used, ICT has improved administrative efficiency and enhanced transparency in the electoral process apart from reducing costs on the long run. It reduced the efforts and manpower that is needed to run elections and removed electoral rigging. It also provided electronic registration for voters and results can also be transmitted thus. Manual voting is usually prone to manipulation, was slow and time consuming apart from being manpower intensive and difficult to tally.

Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said there will be no electronic voting for the 2019 general elections. The current chairman of the Commission Professor Mahmood Yakubu cited cost of the electronics, legal issues as well as poor infrastructure as delaying the full deployment of ICT for the election, stalling the democratic process. Partial ICT will still be used in the collation and transmission of electronic results though. Ekwealor (2018) has equally pointed out that the proper legal framework needs to be put in place before full e-voting can be adopted in Nigeria. The election budget must be honed, along with the requisite technology and the necessary voter education.

Nigeria's first (and Africa's second) electronic voting elections were tried in Kaduna state for the Local Government elections on May 12, 2018 after several teething problems and rescheduling (and after successfully passing the Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission Bill No 10 of 2012 into law). The bill was to allow the use of electronic machines for voting and verification for the LG and Council elections. This is believed to bring credibility and security into the democratic process. The EVMs used were made by a Chinese company. It has fingerprint scanner, uses batteries and runs on Android 5.1. Voters first get accredited with their Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and may then vote by picking their candidate and pressing the selected icon on the machine screen where all the candidates' information had already been stored, along with their party logos on the screen. This was to simplify the voting system and depaperize it. The EVMs made the process easier for first time users and even non literates can make their selections appropriately. It is however still mandatory that voters be sensitized. Voters' education, to familiarize electorates with the use of the EVMs were arranged prior to the elections, and it was thought to be of limited success. Use of technology is still highly restricted for several reasons - vulnerability of the internet to manipulations, insecurity of hosts, attack of virus and interference, among others.

Security in Politics

Security is one of the most vital of basic human needs (after food and shelter) without which humans cannot survive or function optimally. Without security there cannot be development; economic, social, environmental and food security are of import; of lives and property and technological security too. Man is a political animal and the way society is organized it is politics that structures people's interactions such that power is given to a few to run the body polity. Security is necessary in politics. If security is not ensured in democracy it cannot succeed. Things that affect political stability encroach on the democratic process and do not make for good governance and development. The issue of security in Nigeria generally continues to be a sore spot (Boko Haram, Kidnapping, vandalism, insurgency, terrorism etc) and has translated into the political arena. Again, poverty affects democracy too, as well as global security. It breeds insecurity by undermining the capacity of the nation to deliver basic physical security, legitimate governance, economic growth and social welfare. Political security strengthens the political system as it allows political parties to work independently on their plan to govern according to the constitution of the country.

In the technology-based experiment with the elections in the northern part of the country, there was a voter education manual on how to use the EVM, which begs the question of access to nonliterates and vernacular speaking voters. Training for use were scheduled as close to the election time as possible to aid memory. Staff also had to be trained to operate the machines; results were released instantly and already computed to reduce error margins and the machines were thought to be virtually tamper-proof. The electronic component can be made further secure by transmitting votes to a central location to act as back up and monitor progress. Challenges experienced included connectivity problems, the transition from the traditional ballot box type elections initially stymied voters but the ease of use and easy to follow instructions with pictures made the entire process a success overall. Though it was quick, convenient and secure, the strangeness of the experience and not supplying the equipment early enough dampened the enthusiasm a bit, but all told, it was not such a bad experience that a few tweaking here and there cannot make for a better experience subsequently.

Security agencies are equally very important to the nation with regards to politics. They are expected to be invested in public protection rather than showing allegiance to political individuals/groups/parties. The national security system is supposed to protect the citizenry, however becoming enmeshed in the politics may derail the security agent's duty and they may become political pawns in the hands of corrupt politician who can use them to sway votes their way and they can also be used to harass or terrorize the people, thus failing in their primary duty

of protection and security. All these problems could be minimized with the incorporation of ICT into the political process. Sabotaging the expected roles of the security organizations will be an assault on democracy as they are supposed to be largely non-partisan and fair, they should be neutral and act professionally in the discharge of their duties. The current political climate in Nigeria has shown top security officials and agencies blatantly displaying their support for the incumbent president in various ways that does not uphold the confidence resided in them in terms of national security.

Adult Education and methods

Adult education is any and all forms of education, formal, informal and non-formal undertaken by people in the form of self-development and for the benefit of the larger society as well. It is all forms of practical experiences that modify people and make their lives better. Adults run the political system as you have to be a certain age to be eligible to vote and be voted for. They are expected to take the interest of children into consideration and protect their interests. In terms of politics, a good education can facilitate the political process. Oparah (op cit) adds that the relationship between education and politics in Nigeria as symbiotic, while political ideologies may be taught in schools to shape the education, education equally modifies the politics. Politics and education are thus inextricably intertwined in many ways. The roots of adult education can be traced to the one obtained right from the home as the basis of education to build on, with parents serving as role models of good behaviour. Democratic ideals are thus embedded in the values taught right from the home in the form of honesty, hard work, fairness etc., which should equally manifest in the larger society where poor behavior and lack of morals are treated with disdain. Unfortunately, the values in the society seem to have been eroded to the point that it affects the democracy. A very big part of problems encountered in politics in Nigeria can be adduced to corruption which is one of the banes of the society. In politics it may manifest in the shape of bribery of the electoral officials and electorates to influence votes for individual or group political benefit. It can also be found in election rigging or the falsification of results to favour a particular candidate. This translates into incompetent and unqualified candidates being at the helms of affairs and does not bode well for political ideals. Ugwoegbu (2012) suggests that adult education can be used to minimize corruption in Nigeria. This would serve as the double edged sword of reducing corruption and improving the political atmosphere.

There are several adult education methods that can be used to enhance democratic ideals. Popular methods include Sensitization, ICT Education, Voter's Education, Peace Education and Security education. Other types of adult education necessary to help achieve the democratic ideal are ICT Literacy, Training (and retraining), Public enlightenment, Mass Education with a generous use of the mass media (print and electronic) to convey information and educate the populace. In all its forms, adult education helps to increase political participation, along with the provision of infrastructure and enabling environment for democracy to flourish with modern technology. For adult education to be responsive to the situation it must be consistent, for immediate use, meaningful, clear and simple to follow and with copious illustrations so that even the non-literate in the society can benefit and participate.

Conclusion

Nigerian citizens need to stop being docile and hold their leaders accountable and ensure that their votes speak for them to enable security and bring about development. Leaders should develop a conscience and make good governance a goal towards the democratic ideal. They should show commitment, integrity and the political will to govern effectively. They should be concerned with collective security and not the selfish use of the security apparatus for personal intent. Politicians should encourage an open line of communication with their constituents and allow for feedback as well as hold town hall meetings frequently; they should abide by the constitutional rules of democracy in order to address security challenges in the Nigerian body polity towards democratic ideals.

Nigeria cannot be left behind in the technology race. Whether we like it or not we have to join the global quest for technology and so far we are holding our own, although there is need to stop the dependence on imported technology and begin to create our own and allow it to spread through all levels of activities, especially politics, given the speed of technical obsolescence in technology. There is no escaping its pervasiveness in the global economy. ICT can undoubtedly aid the political system in Nigeria and help promote democratic ideals. However there are currently seemingly insurmountable barriers to the full adoption, especially for electoral purposes. The body polity is fond of spouting platitudes about democratic ideals without putting action into the words, thus rendering democracy a sham. However adult education can facilitate the integration of ICT into the socio-political dynamics. After all, it has been done successfully in other countries and will eventually gain stronger roots in the nation and help boost development and better recognition in the world global village. After all ICT is already partially incorporated into the political system in Nigeria already but the political and electoral processes can be fully digitalized and managing officials properly trained to handle and maintain equipment. This translates into more rigorous funding by the government to build a more robust upgraded voting system different from the current backward practices and use of modern technology to replace the outdated machinery of yore.

It is thus not enough to have security in other spheres of the society devoid of political security since politics is a huge part of the national structure. If politics are not organized with the democratic ideal in consideration, security cannot be guaranteed and development will be stifled. Just like it is necessary to ensure security of lives and property, security is equally required in politics such that electorates can exercise their franchise safely and with trust in the efficacy of the system to deliver a fair and credible electoral process. ICT incorporation into the delivery of the electoral process will give peace of mind and strengthen the society. Adult education is the essential rubrics on which the political process is built and is needed throughout the process to fulfill different demands of the adult, ranging from literacy, vocational education, peace education and voter education will all prepare and equip the people to have faith in their leaders, develop a foundation and atmosphere where true democracy can be credibly practiced and ultimately engender peace and development. When the necessary infrastructure is put in place and adult education incorporated in every facet of people's lives, standard of living will be elevated, development enabled and global compliance assured. Adult education can undoubtedly be used to promote democratic ideals and along with ICT, help ease even the technophobe into the new millennium.

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