Power Sharing, Ethnicity and Voting Behaviour in Nigerian: Experience from the 2015 Presidential Election

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Abstract: This study interrogates the nexus between power sharing, ethnicity and voting behaviour in Nigeria. It argues that the negation of power sharing in political equation of Nigeria by the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) led to the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour during the 2015 presidential election in Nigerian. The study maintains that the numbers of votes scored by All Progressive Congress (APC) and PDP in different parts of the country during the election amply indicate a manifestation of ethnicity in voting behaviour. The APC with Northern presidential candidate and Southwest running mate secured bloc votes from the North as well as in the Southwest but failed abysmal in the south-south, the ethnic base of the PDP candidate. The study relies solely on evidence sourced from documentary data and applies discourse and trends analytical technique in the analysis of data. The theoretical framework that anchors the study is the failed expectations and alternative choice theory. The study concludes that ethnicity was a determinant factor in the 2015 presidential election outcome. It recommends national re-orientation to imbibe nationalistic spirit among Nigerians; the inclusion of power sharing arrange in the constitution to guarantee equal access to political power by the ethnic nationalities; and reform of the electoral institutions and processes to guarantee free, fair and credible elections.

Key words: Ethnicity · Nigeria · Power Sharing · Voting Behaviour · 2015 Presidential Election.

INTRODUCTION

Elections in Nigeria dates back to 1922, when the Clifford constitution introduced elective principle into the 1923 legislative elections. This development permitted Nigeria's first election which the candidate of NDP won though characterized by ethnicity [1]. The Richard constitution of 1946 further marked the beginning of ethnicity in voter behaviour in Nigerian's elections by introducing regional political parties in Nigerian. Furthermore, the Lytleton constitution of 1954 encouraged the enthronement of strong ethnic based political parties which led to the Kano riot of 1953. Worse still, ethnic politics and regionalisation was entrenchment during the 1954 general elections into Central Legislature. The results of elections showed that the NCNC, AG and NPC at the forefront had overwhelming majority votes in their favour only within their ethno-regional enclaves [2].

Subsequently, the 1959 general elections, results, reflected the dominant of ethnicity in voter behaviour in Nigeria as the dominant political parties won substantial votes within their ethnic homelands. Even though the NCNC and AG won elections outside their home base, it should be noted that they won only in the minority ethnic enclaves through the encouragement of the ethnic agitations in the struggle for political power.

Again, the colonial masters through their obnoxious policy of divide and rule fanned and entrenched ethnic ethos to perpetuate their rule and neo-colonial influence in Nigeria. The British imperialist manipulated the electoral process and out rightly rigged the 1959 general election in favour of the north to plant political leadership dominated by northern elements that would protect its interests on the heels of colonial administration in Nigeria [3].

The immediate elections that followed after independence were not immune to ethnicity. The 1963/64 population census was falsified by the ethnic groups to prepare ground for rigging the 1964/65 elections. This further sowed the seeds of discords among the social groupings in the country [3] as the ethnic groups manipulated the electoral processes to falsify election results in favour of their ethnic controlled political parties.

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As Eke rightly observed, the massive rigging, falsification of results and intimidation of political opponents that characterised the 1964/65 elections worsen the hope of harmonious relations among the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The flawed electoral process resulted into the crisis that led to 30 months civil war [1]. The presidential elections of 1979 and 1983 were also characterised by massive rigging perpetrated by ethnic forces to favour parties' candidates from their ethnic groups.

Remarkably, the June 12, 1993 election was a paradigm shift in the history of presidential elections in Nigeria as the presumed winner of the election, M. K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) worn substantial votes nationwide and even defeated Bashiru Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC) even in his ethnic home town, Kano [4]. The voting behaviour of Nigerians in the presidential elections that ushered in the Fourth Republic was also freed from ethnicity as the results of the election showed that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Candidate Chief Olusegun Obasanjo had a nationwide support.

Since then the results of other presidential elections conducted in 2003 and 2007, revealed a substantial reduction of ethnic manifestation in voter behaviour. Besides, the results of 2011 presidential election which was conducted in the heat of politics of power shift between the north and south also showed relative decline in the ethnic manifestation in voter behaviour across the country. The candidate of the PDP Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan received nationwide massive supports and even defeated Muhammad Buhari in his home state, Kastina [5]. Unfortunately there was a resurgence of ethnic manifestation in voting behaviour in the 2015 presidential election results. This development raised academic puzzle that necessitated the convocation of this study.

Statement of the Problem: The resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour in the 2015 presidential election has provoked academic puzzle that constitutes serious source of worry to academics, politicians, public spirited individuals and other stakeholders in Nigerian democratic project. Although the mosaic nature of Nigeria state naturally predispose Nigerians to particularistic behaviour, such attitudes have been observed to be gradually on the decline as evidenced in the aborted 1993 presidential election, the 1999, 2003, 2007 and the 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria. In these elections the winners secured substantial votes in ethnic groups other than their own across the country.

Unfortunately, during the 2015 presidential election, the candidates of the two dominant political parties (PDP and APC) only secured majority of the votes cast only within their ethnic home lands. Despite the attendant implications which this negative trend portends for good governance and democratic stability in Nigeria, the outcome of the election was highly celebrated and even viewed in many quarters by stakeholders as a welcome development, on the ground that it was the first time an incumbent president lost election to opposition party. Granted that the election really marked a water shade in the annals of the development of Nigerian democracy, it would be more rewarding to understand the reasons and implications of the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour in Nigeria rather than paying fleeting attention to it. To address this puzzle, the researcher poses the following questions:

- Is there any nexus between power sharing and resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour in Nigeria during the 2015 presidential election?
- What are the implications of the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour for good governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
- What will be done to check mate this menace?

Conceptual and theoretical Underpinnings

Ethnicity: Ethnicity as a concept has no generally accepted definition among scholars as various meanings and interpretations are given to it by scholars. According to Osaghae [6: 20], ethnicity is "the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage situations in competition, conflict or cooperation". This definition identifies two issues that are central to the discussion on ethnicity. The first is that ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental but a product of a conscious effort by social actors to outsmart another. The second is that ethnicity does not only manifest in conflictive or competitive relations but also in the context of cooperation. A corollary to the second is that ethnicity manifest itself in various forms, including voting, community service and violence.

For some scholars ethnicity is the attribute of membership in a group set off by racial, territorial, economic, religious, aesthetic or linguistic uniqueness [7]. According to Wegh [8], an ethnic group is a self-perceived group of people who hold common traditions that are not shared by others with whom they are in contact. These tradition according to him include;

religious beliefs and practice, language, a sense of historical continuity and a common ancestry or place of origin. In explanation of the pervasive characteristic of ethnic identity, Roosens (1989) in Tsuwa and Ukuma [9], notes:

> *The cultural traits by which an ethnic group defies itself never compromise the totality of the observable cultural but are only a combination of some characteristic that the actors ascribe to the selves and consider relevant. These traits can be replaced by others in the course of time* (Roosens, 1989:32).

For Ukiwo [10:47], ethnicity encompasses the behaviour of ethnic groups. In these sense "ethnic groups are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myth of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory". While all these variables need not be present before a group is so defined, the important thing is that such a group is classified or categorised as having a common identity that distinguishes it from others. Thus, ethnicity is not so much a matter of shared traits or cultural commonalities but the result of the interplay between external categorisation and self-identification [11]. In this context, ethnicity is employed to mean what other scholars will call tribalism, denoting the behaviour, attitudes and loyalties that result from belonging to ethnic identity to gain political advantage in situation of competition.

Furthermore, Nnoli [2: 6] observes that "Ethnicity does not involve the demand for a foreign status or the use of state apparatus on behalf of an ethnic group to the exclusion of others, or the incorporation of an ethnic group into a political society". He concludes that it is the relationship between the ethnic groups in a given polity that produces ethnicity. Corroborating this position Dabo [12:74] avers: "Ethnicity can simply be explained as a social phenomenon associated with contract with among ethnic groups that exist within the same political system which is characterised by culture, prejudice and social discrimination". Ethnicity therefore, is a phenomenon linked directly or indirectly to the forms of affiliation and identification built around ties of real kinship and all of these, the factor of common consciousness boundary of group than relevant for understanding ethnicity at any historical point of time. Nnoli [13:97] and Dabo [12:75] notes:

> *In reality, ethnicity is a very complex phenomenon like all social phenomena, it is subject to change. Its forms, place and role in society may alter. Its links with other phenomenon, subject as politics, region and class may change as circumstance changes.*

Hence ethnicity sometimes finds expression in political domination, economic exploitation, psychological expression and class manipulation. It is often used as a tool in the conflictive power play and struggle by groups to control resources and obtain certain advantages in society.

Power Sharing: Extant literature reveals different conceptions of power sharing. The Political Bureau Report [13] defined power sharing as a process in which political posts are shared among top military functionaries and elected or appointed civilians. This definition sees power sharing as a means of allocating key political posts in a diverse society. For Lijphart [14: 25] Power sharing is a set of principles which, when carried out through practices and institutions, provide every relevant identity group or segment in a society representation and decision-making abilities on common issues and a degree of autonomy over issues of importance to the group.

Power sharing to Sisk [15] entails practices and institutions that result in wide-based governing coalition generally inclusive all major ethnic groups. Towards this goal, power sharing would involve granting of autonomy, having the presence of federations and proportional electoral systems. In this context, power-sharing represents "a set of principles that when carried out through institutions and practices, provide every significant identity group or segment in a society representation and decision-making abilities on common issues and a degree of autonomy over issues of importance to the group" [15:5]. In Nigeria, power sharing reflects in federalism and creation of states, the adoption of centralised and proportional revenue allocation formula; zoning, rotation and federal character principles in office distribution; as well as distribution requirements in electoral and party systems [16].

Voting Behaviour: Samuel S. Eldersveld in his 'theory and Method in voting Behaviour research' writes: The term 'voting Behaviour' is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomena which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant [17]. They further

assert that voting behaviour is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves an analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion and motivation) and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections.

In the words of Plana and Riggs, cited in Zahida and Younis [17], voting Behaviour, is a field of study concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and reasons why they vote as they as they do. For Bratton, voting behaviour is a set of personal electoral activities, including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls and choosing for whom to vote [18]. The voting Behaviour has recently been expanded in the meaning and is taken as one major and broad area of study.

The Context and Roots of Power Sharing in Nigeria: Prior to independence the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria had earlier observed and expressed their worries over the fears of domination or marginalisation by each other. The Willink Commission in its observations was of the opinion that there were genuine fears which painted a bleak future for the minority groups. Events in Nigeria since independence justify this position. The pre and post-independent regional arrangement had created ethnically based political elites who were not ready to compromise their ethnocentric biases and prejudices. Thus, the human factor rather than exigencies of nature compounded the ethnic differentiation in the Nigerian polity. At independence, the three major political parties had their base in their respective regions. The regional political had elites their political parties held unto a tight control of their region. The above characteristically defined the nature of politics in Nigeria. The elites were desperate to capture power outside their region but not willing to cede the control of their region to other political parties. In the "do or die" electoral contest that ensued, the three parties resorted to various forms of electoral malpractices and the incitement of one ethnic group against another [19]. In November 1965, allegations of electoral malpractices in the Western Regional Election triggered violent protests and breakdown of law and order in the Region [6].

While the minorities in each of the three regions were seeking for the creation of additional states, the political elites were calculating the exercise not in terms of regional interest but their political interest if the regions were fragmented into smaller component units. The more

resources within a region would determine the political power of the elites *vis a vis* availability of wealth to perpetuate their tight grip on the political process. For instance, the crisis within the leadership rank of Action Groups in 1962 was occasioned by the disagreement over the imminent challenge to the authority of the leadership rather than the interest of the region as a corporate entity.

The Northern and Eastern political elites refused fragmentation, while the West supported the creation of a Mid-Western state if others did the same [20, 21, 6]. Ibibio-Efik and other smaller groups proposed creation of a new region between the Niger Delta and Calabar in order to end Igbo domination (here, but proved unsuccessful for the time being. However, in 1963 Edo and Western Igbo were granted a separate Mid-Western region, reducing the Yoruba dominance in that part of the country. The success of this exercise was more political than policy. Successive state creation exercises meant the creation of units for the promotion of the interests of local political elites. Governors and other political leaders have seen the states as instruments of personal wealth.

Similarly, the idea of federal character principle has not achieved the desired result except the promotion of sectional interest rather than stimulating national consciousness. Political elites exploit this principle to make demands on the federal government with a view to ensuring the consolidation of their control. Consequently, federal character has created more minorities in the various states. Political elites use their power to consolidate their hold on power. Appointments into federal service were given only mostly to party faithful. Thus, those not members or relatives of the political elites were left out of the exercise. This means, the application of the principle created more problems of marginalization.

The Niger Delta area is the most prominent victim of the politics of minority issues. Rather than addressing the development needs of the common people, all the various intervention measures and projects were avenues created for the political elites to access the treasuries. Majority of the money and resources allocated for the various projects ended up in the private pockets of political elites and their cronies [22, 23, 24, 25].

For instance the Task Force set up by the Shagari administration was allocated 1.5% of the Federation Account to tackle the developmental problems of the region. Although the Committee existed until the early years of the Babangida regime, it was very ineffective and there were only a few projects to show for the revenues it received from the Federation Account [26]. Apart from

corruption and mismanagement on the part of the members of the Committee, it was doubtful if the federal government ever made the 1.5% allocations in full to the Committee. Critics also say that most of the revenue the Committee received ended up in private accounts and did not reach the poor people of the oil producing communities. By 1985, the Committee was virtually moribund. It is on records that other policies and programmes meant address the minority question in Nigeria to say least never yielded their desired results.

Ethnicity as a Determinant of Voter Behaviour: Many empirical studies on voting behaviour support that ethnicity matters for voter alignment and even more so for party affiliation [27, 28]. These studies therefore, conclude that ethnicity provides the basic social cleavage for voting behaviour in many African countries, Campell *et al*. [29] suggests that ethnicity should not be abandoned as a determinant of the vote choice but the way it is looked at most obviously be redefined in support of the Andrews and Inmann [30] study. Lindberg and Morrison [31] reported that "clentelistic and ethnic predisposed voting are minor features of the Ghanaian electorate. This corroborates the assertion about elections by Horowitz [32] when he described elections as nothing more than "ethnic consensus."

In the last few years ethnic and racial influence on voting decisions was studied more than other issues. These studies agree that race and ethnicity had great influence on voter behaviour [33, 34]. In other words, voters may support a candidate from their own race or ethnicity based on the assumption that a candidate who shares their racial or ethnic background also shares their basic political views [35]. Andre Blais contended that, while some socio-economic characteristics such as class have become less important over time, it is impossible to understand recent Canadian elections without looking at religion and ethnicity as important determinants of voting behaviour [36]. Concurring with this view, Ihonvbere and Shaw [37], argues that electoral competition in Nigeria is almost synonymous with ethnic competition, thus the manipulation of ethnic sentiments becomes part of the dynamics of the patrimonial system.

Socio-Economic Determinants of Voter Behaviour: The socio-economic determinants of voting behaviour in Canadian Federal Elections have been extensively studied since the Canadian Election Studies (CES) was done in 1965 [38]. While some researchers have disagreed [39, 40], most studies have found that socio-economic characteristics are an important predictor of voter's choice in Canadian elections [41]. Indeed, in his 2005 presidential address to the Canadian Political Science Association,

The wealth of research on the socio-economic determinants of voting in Canadian elections has produced number of findings that have almost reached the status of 'laws' within the discipline of political science in Canada. The results of these studies have been quite consistently that high income earners and non-union members vote Progressive Conservative or Reform/Canadian Alliance while low-income earners and union members vote NDP [42, 43, 44, 45]. In all the studies affirm that socio-economic divisions shape outcomes of Canadian elections [46].

Political Party Affiliation and Voter Behaviour: A study in Canada revealed that strong party identifiers vote their parties irrespective of candidates and issues, while weak party identifiers are likely to be influenced by campaign messages to change their party allegiance [47]. In studies conducted in the United States, two conclusions have been reached by scholars on voter behaviour. The first is that strong party identifiers participate (vote) in elections more than weak and non-party identifiers [29]. The second is that party identification is declining and this, to a large extent, is responsible for low voter turnout in recent times in that country [48].

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework that anchors this study is the failed expectations and alternative choice theory. The central proposition of this theory is that human beings are rational creatures and would always make choices that lead to the realization of their set objectives or goals. The theory affirms that human beings are rational elements and as such cannot make choices that are opposed to their interests [49, 50]. These objectives or goals could be socio-economic or political and if their choices cannot produce the expected goals, either in the short run or in the long run, individuals are likely to abandon such choice for other alternative that are likely to guarantee the realization of those goals which their earlier choices had failed to realize [51-54]. Heap *et al*. [55] opines that people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do.

Relating the above theoretical propositions to the problem under study, it is axiomatic to argue that the Nigeria voters were rationally guided by their socio-

economic and political interests in their choice of the candidates they voted for, during the 2015 presidential election. In their choice of a particular candidate was tied to the belief that their new alternative will lead to the realization of what their previous choice had failed to realize.

Methodology: The study adopted qualitative method in carrying out its investigation. The data employed for the study were gathered from secondary sources. As such, data used for this study were collected from internet, public libraries as well as private libraries of a number of colleagues and associates within and outside the country. The study utilized both content analysis and trend analytical techniques for the analysis of data.

Theoretical Discourse and Analysis: Nigerian state is a mosaic of antagonistic ethnic formations that have nothing in common except their colour. Metumara [56] has rightly observed that Nigeria is an amalgam of rival ethnic groups pitched against each other in a contestation of power and resources that have reflected in the political process which sometimes threatens the corporate existence of the country.

These ethnic formations were welded into one administrative umbrella through the forces of British colonialism. Unarguably, bringing together of about three hundred and seventy (370) ethnic groups of varying population and geographical sizes was bound to be accompanied by certain political hiccups. Obviously, the major challenge has been how to accommodate the various components units in the country in the distribution of political offices and socio-economic benefits. Right from the colonial era, the hues and cries of marginalization of the minority groups by the majority groups have continued to resonate across the length and breadth of the country. Undoubtedly, since politics is primarily centred over the struggle for control of state power and distributions of scarce resources, evolving accommodative principles to guarantee equitable distributions of power and resources not just for the federating units but ensuring balancing among the diverse cultural pluralities is highly imperative. Logically, without acceptably defined principles of accommodation, the struggle for power and resources among contending forces in the political equation of Nigerian State could be hobbesian, especially where government is expected to do virtually everything.

Against this backdrop, power sharing has been put in place as antidote that will guarantee equal access to political power and even distributions of socio-economic benefits among the ethnic nationalities. Alluding to this assertion, Isumonah [57] noted that, since the 1970s, the search for stable inter-ethnic relations among Nigeria's multiple ethnic nations has been characterized by emphasis on sharing of political power. Precisely, the elements of power-sharing manifest in Nigerian politics manifest in the form of territorial compartmentalization of ethnic nationalities and revenue distribution to the units of government [58, 59, 60, 61, 62]. Lending credence to the manifestations of power sharing in Nigerian politics, Nkwachukwu [16] avers that power sharing reflects in federalism and creation of states, the adoption of centralized and proportional revenue allocation formula; zoning, rotation and federal character principles in office distribution; as well as distribution requirements in electoral and party systems.

Unfortunately in the 2015 presidential election, power sharing was negated by the PDP in the nomination of the presidential candidate. Consequently, voting behaviour in Nigeria followed the manner of ethnic consciousness, where the western and northern political alignment saw the emergence of Muhamadu Buhari as the President under the platform of All Progressive Congress (APC). This manifested glaringly in number of votes secured by APC in the western and northern parts of the country.

The resurgence of ethnicity in the voting behaviour of Nigerians has negative implications for national consciousness and patriotic spirit of Nigerians and these invariably affect the enthronement of good governance and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. A democratic and stable nation is marked by high level of national consciousness and patriotism, but in Nigeria the revise is the case. This unfortunately has blossomed ethnic consciousness and nationalism rather than a nationalistic spirit. Loyalty to ethnic homeland reigns more supreme than patriotism to the sovereignty of Nigerian State. This sometimes brings about unnecessary sentiments, disaffections and political violence that threaten the unity and corporate existence of the country. Njoku [63:59] argued that ethnic nationalism is commonly used to connote a person's loyalty to his ethnic group which parallels or transcends loyalty to his nation state. This implies the elevation of primordial ties to a level of supremacy to the state and other ethnic nationalities. In the same vein, Nigeria is caught in the confusion of loyalty between the state and the ethnic nation; the ethnic

nationalists would veer and tilt in favour of the latter. This explains why tribalism has remained crucial and a cog in the wheel of progress in Nigeria's match to greatness since 1914.

Joshua [64] rightfully remarked that the interplay of ethno-religious sentiment in Nigerian politics boils down to perceived or real loss of power by an elite stratum, the quest for political power among those who won it before, those who lost it and those who want it back. This implies that Nigerian politicians are known for playing ethnic cards for their selfish political gains. That is inciting their own ethnic groups against their opponent's ethnic group in a bid to capture, retain and/or consolidate political power. The violence that trailed the release of the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria in the northern parts of the country, the home country of the Presidential Candidate-General Buhari who lost out in the said election buttresses this fact.

Emeka [65: 21] offered another graphic explanation to the problem of ethnicity when he argued; "tribalism was perhaps the single factor that has nullified all our efforts at evolving a national leadership capable of fulfilling our national aspirations." Since independence, Nigerian State has continued to manifest untold levels of parochialism and tribalism that one wonders what her leaders has been doing to remedy the ugly trends. Historically, political recruitment in Nigeria has long been tortuous and turbulent, making it difficult for genuine democracy to blossom and take root. The challenges facing the Nigeria's electoral process and voting behaviour today have their roots in the manner the past elections were conducted, even from the colonial period especially the 1959 general elections. Comment on the electoral fraud and irregularities that characterised the said election, Achebe (2012:50) noted that: "Harold Smith was selected by Sir James Roberson, the last colonial governor to oversee the rigging of Nigeria's first election, so that its compliant friends in Northern Nigeria would win power, dominate the country and serve British interests after independence." He further observed that the structure of the country was such that there was an inbuilt power struggles among the ethnic groups and of course those who were in power wanted to stay in power. According to Achebe, the easiest way to retain power even in a limited area was to appeal to tribal sentiments and these were egregiously exploited in the 1950s and 1960s.

It is axiomatic to argue that that the phenomenon of ethnic consciousness and ethnic nationalism has been on the rapid increase in Nigeria since the time of

decolonisation of Nigeria to 2015. The way and manner in which the distributions of juicy political appointments and socio-economic benefits are been skewed in favour of Hausa/Fulani ethnic group under the present administration led by Muhammad Buhari clearly indicate that the problem of ethnicity will remain for a long the salient feature of Nigerian politics.

The implication of this development is that political environment will to be a hot bed of ethnic jingoism and its political violence as the ethnic group that feels short changed will always resort to ethnic sentiment and violence to redress her feelings. This invariably undermines the credibility of our electoral processes and democratic consolidation. Segun [66] has succinctly remarked that the predominance of ethnicity in Nigerian politics has grossly undermined the electoral fortunes in the presidential elections in the country. He further noted that violence has marred various elections owing to the overriding influence of the ethnicity in the polity. He equally observed that ethnicity has governed and influenced largely the voting behaviour in the 2011 presidential elections particularly. He asserted that these frequent conflicts have occurred were in the form of religious and ethnic in the country. Omoweh and Okanya [67] submitted that political competition for the control of state and its political power is now a bloody warfare as the state holds the key to wealth. The ethnic coloration attached to elections has predisposed election to ethnic violence. The above scenario explains why election which is the legitimate means of acquiring political power in a democratic setting has been ridden with violence in Nigeria. This assertion is supported by Abbass [68] who maintained that elections period in Nigeria is best described as warfare given the preponderant ethnic bias. He posited that ethnic bias has given rise to high level of insecurity in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour in the 2015 presidential elections has provoked academic puzzle that constitute a serious source of worry to scholars, politicians and other stakeholders in Nigerian democratic project. Against this backdrop this study was set to interrogate the nexus between power sharing, ethnicity and voting behaviour in Nigeria. It argues that there is strong correlation between power sharing and the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour during the 2015 presidential election in Nigerian. The study affirmed

that there is a strong correlation between power sharing and the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour among Nigerians during the 2015 presidential election. It argues that the failure of the Peoples Democratic Party to zone its prudential candidate to Northern part of the country during 2015 presidential election, gave room for the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviours in Nigeria. This was manifested in the numbers of votes secured by APC and PDP in different parts of the country during the 2015 presidential election. It explains that the APC with Northern presidential candidate and Southwest running mate secured bloc votes from the North as well majority of votes in the Southwest but failing abysmal in the south-south, the ethnic base of the PDP candidate and south-east. The study concludes that ethnicity was a determinant factor of the outcome of the 2015 presidential election. It submits that the way of the menace lays in national re-orientation to imbibe nationalistic spirit among Nigerians and the inclusion of power sharing arrange in the constitution to guarantee equal access to political power by the ethnic nationalities. It equally recommends for the reform of the electoral laws, institutions and processes to guarantee free, fair and credible elections.

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