

YOUTHS AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ABUBAKAR IBRAHIM'S *SEASON OF CRIMSON BLOSSOM*

Dr. Ifeoma Cassandra Nebeife

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
ifeoma@fuwukari.edu.ng, ifycassandra@gmail.com, +2347039837113,

&

Hussaini Addau Magaji

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
hussainiaddau@gmail.com, +2348036075773

Abstract

Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's debut novel, *Season of Crimson Blossom* (2015) has been read by scholars as a text on gender discrimination and female subjugation, quest for survival, lust and its attendant sexual escapades, cultural limitations, Oedipus complex, rejection, psychosis, pain, corrupt political structure and so on. While the aforementioned interpretations of this text are insightful, however, the flagrant manipulation of the youths by political office holders to achieve their selfish gains in the text is yet to get adequate scholarly attention. Relying on the political culture theory as the tool with which the analysis of the text will be made, the paper adopts a qualitative approach as its research methodology. This paper examines the untoward acts of political office holders who in their selfish, dishonest and deceitful manners, manipulate the minds of the young population, to remain as tools in their hands in settling scores between themselves and their political opponents. Consequently, findings from this study reveal that there is a specific link between the role of education in liberating the minds of the youth from wanton juvenile activities and the conscious effort of the political class to retain these youths in illiteracy and ignorance. This is to continually exert their will on the majority of the masses who voted them into power.

Keywords: Youths, Electoral Violence, Education, Political Manipulation, Corruption.

Introduction

In every democratic system of governance, election is the only legitimate determinant entrance to political office or leadership. It is an important constituent in facilitating good governance practices and consolidation of democracy. Elections provide the avenue for the electorates to express their will and choice and give legitimacy to their political leaders. Election periods give an opportunity for the electorate to assess not only the performance of the party in power but indicate their expectations from the future government. Hence, the power to rule or to lead emanates from the citizens or the electorate. To elect and to be elected into any political office is both a political and human right. The Article 21 of 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that, "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government as expressed in periodic and genuine elections." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides, also, that "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections".

Nigeria like many other African states has a chequered history of electoral violence and conflicts. The politicians in Nigeria have over the years become more desperate and daring in taking and retaining power. This is in terms of being more reckless and greedier in their use and abuse of power. They are seen to be constantly intolerant of opposition, criticism and efforts at replacing them. These conflicts orchestrated and perpetrated by political elites and their allies, have been for selfish actualization of primitive accumulation anchored on regional sentimentalism, ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry, economic materialism and political domination of the State. To achieve their inordinate interest, these politicians manipulate the youths into accepting them as the corner stone for their survival in the State. Some members of the political class often arm the youths with dangerous weapons to prosecute the elections in their favour. Those already in government use the men of the Nigeria Police to harass their opponent(s), protect themselves and even use the youths to unleash mayhem against their perceived enemies. These youths are hardly arrested nor detained for the havoc they may have caused. The youths therefore, are at the heart of most violent conflicts in the country. There are indications that most Nigerian leaders acquired their positions by demonstrating an ability to use corruption and political violence to prevail in sham elections. In violent and brazenly rigged polls, government officials have denied millions of Nigerians any real voice in selecting their political leaders. In place of democratic competition, struggles for political office have often been

waged violently in the streets by gangs of thugs- youths - recruited by politicians to help them seize control of power. The incidence of electoral violence that first started in the form of "political riot" continued to reoccur in other forms such as killings, assassination, kidnapping and looting as well as maiming and destruction of properties. The foregoing suggests that every nation state has a political culture guiding the operation of its political matters. It is however disappointing that despite having gone through five general elections and one recorded electoral turn-over since 1999, Nigeria's political culture is yet characterized by lack of patriotism, low level of social trust, manipulations and poor leadership.

The manifestation of political culture of impunity is quite glaring in contemporary Nigeria. Political culture of impunity translates to that attitudinal cum behavioural tendency among some politicians, especially those in power or close to those in power, which offers that megalomaniac sense of freedom, if not license, to commit offense without punishment, retribution, reprisal or injurious consequences. Experiences have shown that impunity reigns supreme in political systems that are still under the regimentation of military government or in militarized civilian democracies like Nigeria. In fact, the supposed democratic ethos, values and institutions still resonate and bristle with diverse colorations of arbitrariness, manipulation and authoritarianism. When this situation lingers over time, the consequence or end-product is usually the erosion of all hitherto existing democratic virtues. Allied to this is the unconscious socialization of the people into a somewhat carefree attitude where anything goes. The leaders are seen to be morally bankrupt when they focus solely on satisfying their personal dreams and aspirations. Little wonder the political class perennially stands aloof of the people's feeling and heartfelt aspirations, especially those that the dividends of democracy could ordinarily affect with ease. Having, mortgaged their conscience to and murdered their good sense of humanistic disposition in the court of impunity, they unabashedly deep their hands into the common wealth of the people to line their pockets for their own selfish and personal aggrandizement. More worrisome is the fact that the youths tend to serve as willing and available ploy for committing political crimes.

The quest to access power and remain in office propel the political leaders to engage the youths in perpetrating electoral violence and other heinous crimes including murder, intimidation and harassment of perceived political opponents as seen in Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's debut novel, *Season of Crimson Blossom*. Evidently, *Season of Crimson Blossom* has been read variously

by scholars as a text on gender discrimination and female subjugation, quest for survival, lust and its attendant sexual escapades, cultural limitations, Oedipus complex, rejection, psychosis, pain, corrupt political structure and so on. While the aforementioned interpretations of this text are illuminating, the flagrant manipulation of the youths by political office holders to achieve their selfish gains in the text, however, is yet to get adequate scholarly attention. Therefore, this paper highlights how the youths serve as ploy for electoral violence in a corrupt political enclave with a reflection from Ibrahim's debut novel, *Season of Crimson Blossom*.

Conceptualization of Corruption, Electoral Violence and Youths.

Corruption

Corruption is a concept that has been interpreted differently by different scholars. Its conception has drawn a variety of competing and opposing viewpoints and approaches in recent years, and it is thus regarded as a global phenomenon that has long been associated with human society. It has been identified as the source of the majority of political and economic crises in the world (Lawal & Tobi, 2001). Bribery, nepotism, or moral degradation can all be used to corrupt a person's integrity or state of affairs. It occurs when at least two people collaborate to alter society's structure or procedures, or functionaries' behaviour, in order to create a dishonest, unfaithful, or polluted condition. In other words, corruption is a systemic vice that manifests itself as favoritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, money accumulation, abuse of office, power, or position, and deprivation of others for undue profits and benefits. Corruption also includes bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payment, money laundering, inflation of contract costs, drug trafficking, gun running, falsification of documents and records, window dressing, false declaration of age, tax evasion, underpayment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting to the detriment of an individual, country, society or nation (Khan, 1996, Onigu, 2000; Franlio, 2000).

Corruption can also be defined as an obsessive desire for unauthorized, unethical, and frequently criminal acquisition of wealth or benefits by individuals whose primary motivation is ego bragging and self-aggrandizement, with detrimental effects for the rest of society. Put differently, corruption is a general concept describing any organized, interdependent system in which part of the system is either not performing duties it was originally intended to, or performing them in an improper way to the detriment of the system's original purpose (Aiyegbayo, 2000, Otite 1986). As noted by Ojukwu and Shopeju

(2010), there are myriad forms of corruption and these include but not limited to: political corruption, bureaucratic corruption (misappropriation of public funds), money laundering (such as looted funds and wealth kept safely abroad), gratification (which involves monetary, pecuniary, material or physical favour as a condition or reward for performing official duty), and nepotism which confers undeserved favor and advantages without receiving or giving gratifications except that of primordial identity. Political corruption is the worst of them all in Nigerian society. This is because it induces other forms of corruption and electoral violence.

Electoral violence

Election means combination of acts and procedures aiming at choosing, selecting or casting of a ballot for a candidate among various candidates as members of parliament and as the head of state (President) of any public and private institutions. (Igbuzor, 2010) Violence, on the other hand means any act or any inducement directly or indirectly aiming at harming or influencing a voter physically, emotionally or psychologically in such a way that affect their genuine or legitimate choice in an election (Igbuzor, 2010). Electoral violence as a major phrase in this research could be defined as: "Any random or organised act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process, threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced 'protection', blackmail, destruction of property or assassination" (Fischer; 2002). A major source of concern is the fact that most of the incidences of electoral violence are linked to the youths.

Youth

The youth entail a period of transition from the dependency of childhood to adulthood independence. Youth, can also mean the time between childhood and adulthood (maturity). It could also refer to one's peak, in terms of health or the period of life known as being a young adult. Youth is also seen as the form, bloom, strength, typical of one, who is young. Youth is an experience that may shape an individual's level of dependency, which can be marked in various ways according to different cultural perspectives. The United Nations defines youths as persons between the ages of roughly 15 and 24. The UN also recognizes that this varies without prejudice to other age groups listed by member states such as 18–30. A useful distinction within the UN itself can be made between teenagers (i.e., those between the ages of 13 and 19) and young adults (those between the ages of 20 and 29).

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to problematize “Youths as Ploy for Electoral Violence in a Corrupt Political Enclave using Abubakar Adam Ibrahim’s *Season of Crimson Blossom*”

To this end, the following specific objectives are targeted by the paper:

- i. To examine the extent to which the youths are used as ploy in the hands of corrupt politicians are represented in the text
- ii. The effect of this manipulation of the youths by politicians on the young population in the text
- iii. To determine how the manipulation of the young population impacts the overall democratic activities of the nation in the text.

Theoretical Framework: Political Culture Theory

This paper adopts the political culture theory to examine the role of political office holders in the manipulation of the young population into electoral violence and other vices during periods of election as seen in Abubakar Adam Ibrahim’s *Season of Crimson Blossom*. Political culture centers on the attitudes of people in political offices. Political culture as theory can be traced to the writings of early political philosophers like Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. A timeless definition of a people’s general culture was given by Tylor (1924 cited in Anifowose & Enemu, 1999, p.210) as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”.

Culture therefore coheres with a multiplicity of what defines a people, corresponding to what Kluckhohn (1963, p.24) described as “the total way of life of a people, the social legacy that the individual acquires from his group”. Political culture, therefore, is that aspect of culture that borders on politics. As stated earlier, it is the prevailing behavioural orientation and attitudinal proclivity to the political system which the members of the political society have been habituated to over time through networks of psycho-mental and dispositional characteristics generally summed up as their way of life. It provides the template for what is politically acceptable or objectionable, and like the general culture of a people, it is acquired and transferred through political socialization. Political socialization in turn is the way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. It is, in the words of Greenstein (1968, p.551) ...all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned at every stage of the life cycle, including not only explicitly political learning but also nominally non-political learning that affects political

behaviour, such as learning of politically relevant social attitude and the acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics (Anifowose & Enemu, 1999, p.219)

However, it was later debated on by Machiavelli and Montesquieu. B. D Silver and K. M Dowley opine that political culture theory embraces both the political ideal and the operating norms of a polity which deals with commonly shared goals and accepted rules as well as pattern of orientations to political objects such as parties, government, the constitution expressed in beliefs, symbols and values (517-550). F.D Weils is of the view that political culture theory is anchored on the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments, which give order and meaning to a political process by providing the rules that govern the behavioural pattern in the political system. Silver and Dowey interpret political culture as a subjective mass phenomenon that consists of orientations towards key objects of the political system and the individual's role in the political system. For Weils, political culture entails that part of culture relevant to politics including political symbols, values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, expectations and goals.

The Roles of Youths in Electoral Violence in a Corrupt Political Enclave: Reflection from Abubakar Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossom*

The novel opens with the omniscient narrator describing the male protagonist, Reza as he invades the home of the female protagonist, Hajiya Binta to rob her, "She took the opportunity to look at him for the first time. He was in his mid-twenties, his lips were dark, and his short, kinky hair was a field of little anthills" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 8). This is a description of a young man who has several youths under his training and authority. They carry out several criminal acts which include sexual harassments, stealing, drugs, and even fetish practices to protect themselves from the law. These are youths who dropped out of primary and secondary education as a result of issues ranging from poverty to unstable family life. Reza and his group of friends including other stray youths who leave home for one reason or the other have officially occupied an incomplete building which they nicknamed, San Siro. This set of young population has made it a habit to always converge at San Siro for several reasons, "At San Siro, the weed was supreme. On the side, some of the boys dealt other things- codeine, solution, tramadol and other assorted mixtures..." (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 36).

These young men milling around San Siro are easily recruited as political thugs when the need arises. The Senator politician who hires them makes sure

that the police do not raid or disturb the activities of the boys. In the neighbouring police post close to San Siro, a new DPO has been posted there and he innocently tries to carry out his duty of maintaining law and order in the neighborhood. The Police activities disturb the smooth running of the activities at San Siro and Reza makes a complain to his boss who is a Senator, "Sir, what about these people? The new man is giving me trouble, sir" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 64). Reza expects the senator to use his political position to protect them from the harassment from the police being that Reza and his boys work for him. The senator complies with Reza's request and the police suddenly turn a blind eye at their activities, at least for the time being. The senator as his manner is, has recruited the boys again for his personal job. Reza discloses this to his right-hand man, Gattuso:

Yes. He wants us to prepare some guys. We are going for some rally.

Elections are drawing near then?

Yes, very soon. So, get the boys ready. I have arranged for a bus to come for us tomorrow morning, you understand? (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 68).

Reza and his boys go for the political rally but they are attacked by opposition group. It degenerates into a fight and Dan Asabe, one of Reza's boys gets his head slit open. The boys are even afraid to take him to a hospital and he is left in one of the rooms in San siro where he receives local treatment from one of the boys.

The boys, unfortunately could not get their balance from the senator before the rally was disrupted so some of the bold ones continue to push Reza for their balance. Dogo is furious when he hears that they are yet to be paid their balance, "What do you mean? No balance? *Kan buran ubannan!* With this broken head and the entire day in the sun, no balance? And I had to travel with my head hanging out of the bus like a travelling chicken, almost grazing my face against the flyover- "(Ibrahim, 2015, p. 89). Reza does not respond to him rather he mourns the battered bus that conveyed them to the rally. He goes to see the Senator and he is ushered into a well beautified office where he joins other visitors to wait for their turn, "Senator Buba Maikudi, who was a professor of civil engineering and owned Bulwark Construction, a company that had enjoyed favourable contracts under several governments, patted his stomach beneath his white *babban riga* and adjusted his glasses" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 96). Senator Maikudi expresses his disappointed over the disrupted rally but

however, he comes up with another game plan. He intimates Reza, "I know who is behind this and we will be dealing with them soon, don't worry" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 96). He has spent two tenures as a senator and served three times as a minister. He is almost seventy years old. Rather than quietly retire from active politics he still wants to install his cousin, Audi Balarabe as a member of House of Representatives. He receives stiff opposition from his party but instead of backing out he vows to deal with them. He brags to Reza, "But we will deal with them. Shegu! Is it not me they want to challenge" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 97). Reza reminds him of the boys' unpaid balance, "He reached beyond the armrest and pulled up a briefcase. He snapped it open and pulled out a wad of notes" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 98). The senator enquires from Reza if the police men still disturb them, Reza responds in the affirmative and the Senator reassures him, "When you called me that time, I called up his boss immediately and said his boys should stop harassing my boys. If he disturbs you again, let me know. *Aikin banza da wofi!* (99). Reza and the Senator rounds off their meeting with Tea towards the early hours of the morning. As the heat of the elections intensifies, Reza and his boys are paid by the Senator to stick up the posters of his candidate round the town in the middle of the night. Hajiya Binta does not approve of the candidate, Reza replies her, "Hey, I don't like him either but that's what my boss paid me to stick up, you understand" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 128).

On the other hand, Mallam Haruna, continues to follow up the electoral process via his old radio. When he comes to woo Binta, "She would listen to him recount and analyze the news, how the politicians were depleting the federal accounts to run their campaigns..." (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 129). Binta expresses her desire for a credible election so that honest leaders can come in to right the wrongs in the polity. However, Mallam Haruna laughs and reminds her of the nature of the politicking in the country. He chides her, "Don't delude yourself, Hajiya, we all know how elections are held here. You vote, they announce whomever they want to announce as winners. You can go jump in the well if you don't like it. Nobody gives a damn really" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 129). Binta reassures Mallam Haruna that the new man at the electoral commission seem to be honest and so would ensure that things are done differently. However, he maintains his position about the already corrupt system as he wonders aloud, "What can one man do against a corrupt system? (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 130). The Senator continues to rent the crowd for his political rally. He knows that he needs to hire the youths for their political campaigns. The young population is aware of the selfish interests of their political leaders and the fact that not much

is being done for them. Some of them now resort to being hired for a paltry sum. Reza continues to work for the Senator, "At San Siro, Reza sat on a bench with a wad of notes in his hands. The young men presented themselves before him one at a time and he handed out a thousand naira note to each" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 140).

These youths daily work hard to earn a living in a society where the rule of law is not respected. The leaders have refused to be accountable to the masses who voted them into power. They are only interested in embezzling the national treasury. The young population is already disillusioned in the ability of their leaders to allow them the benefits of democracy. They thus resort to being ploys in the hands of the politicians when promised a paltry sum. The expectations of the young population seem to lie only on the cash they are paid after working for the politicians. After Reza pays the drivers who drove the bus that was used for the rally, "Reza could not help noticing the identical shuffle of their worn slippers on the concrete as they headed back to their buses, back to the sun-beaten blacktop where they fetched their bread, where someday, their bones would be scraped off and their stories forgotten, trampled into the road, like countless others, by the whizzing wheels of time" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 142). Some of these youths get injured on the scene and others are even arrested by the police when fights break out.

Moreover, these youths continue to inject drugs into themselves while they wait for further instructions and jobs from their boss, the Senator. They constantly stir trouble in the neighborhood through any available means. Initially, Reza was cross with his boys for the pockets of fights amongst them, however on a second thought, he reasons that, "...all that ganja coupled with muscly hotheads, there were bound to be some sparks and some confrontations" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 145).

The Senator continues to relate with Reza, deceiving him into believing that they are friends so that Reza would always play to his whims and caprices. It is his birthday and he continues to praise himself. Bragging about the number of well wishes he has received from people. He attributes it to his hard work even when he knows that people might just be paying lip service to him. He drinks his Tea served in exotic Tea cups and invites Reza to join him. He ascribes his ploy to harm his opponent, Alhaji Shehu Bakori and ultimately stop him from contesting to his hard work and resolve to, "...make sure their future is not mortgaged by incompetent idiots who want to rule this country by whatever means" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 173).

Incidentally, the Senator's son, Hamza enters his father's office and

demands that his father should sponsor him on a trip to Madrid. This is solely because his friends are going on the trip to Madrid. Hamza says to his father the Senator, "And I will need you to help talk to your people about the visa" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 175). Reza cannot help but think of the striking difference between him and Hamza who is even younger than he is. Unconsciously, "Reza looked at Hamza's delicate fingers, and couldn't imagine them ever curling around a hoe, even to clear the backyard garden. However, his own father is languishing on a hospital bed because of lack of care and poverty while this young boy, had graduated from the university. While waiting to start his Master's degree which has been paid for already in one of the best schools abroad, he wants to spend one week in Madrid before school begins. Reza is challenged by the life and achievements of Hamza and unconsciously blurts out to Senator that he intends to go back to school. The Senator surprisingly flips and resorts to discouraging Reza from furthering his education. The Senator knows that education is the key to a successful life. He also knows that when the electorates are educated, they would demand for the dividend of democracy from their leaders. Also, no educated person would want to remain a tool in the hands of politicians for illegal and corrupt practices.

The senator begins to narrate instances of the impotency of education to the youths and to the country, "And this man came here the other day, he said his younger brother has been looking for a job for five years and still hasn't found one. Five years, in this country!" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 177). He recounts instances of more cases of unemployment of graduates after spending years in the university coupled with the incessant strikes. Reza also, chips in his own account of his half-brother who although educated and a teacher could barely take care of his family let alone care for their sick father. In fact, Reza, despite his dubious means of survival seems to be faring better than he is financially. On hearing this, the Senator exclaims, "You see! There was a note of triumph in the senator's voice. You are doing better than he who spends all those years in school, all that money gone, all that time wasted, for what? That is why I think young people like you who are entrepreneurs, who have business acumen, should not waste your lives chasing illusions. That was why when I heard that policeman was messing with your business, I had to intervene. You've heard of Bill Gates, haven't you?" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 178).

The senator is not oblivious of the business of weed and ganja selling which Reza is into, however he commends the business and encourages him to keep at it. He tags Reza's dream of a decent life an "illusion". The senator is so deceitful that he tells Reza that if his son, Hamza had Reza's sort of business

acumen, he would not bother to send him to school. This is not true at all. He is just toying around with the trust and respect which Reza has for him. When he sees that he has succeeded in steering Reza away from the thoughts of going back to school, he launches forward, "Reza, you are a strong man. I am going to ask you to do something, something very serious, very important" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 179). Back at San Siro, Reza inspects the machete gash that one of his boys got on the head during the rally. He is gradually healing. Meanwhile, the politicians who they are working for have their own children abroad, either in schools or on pleasure. The Senator on his part continues to fraternize with Reza. On one of the days when he calls Reza, he tickles him with jokes, "When I was your age, by this time you wouldn't have found me at home. I would have been out trying my charms on young girls" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 203). This is one of the ploys to get Reza steady on his side so as to aid him execute his plans of dealing with his opponents. He instructs his Personal Assistant, Moses to communicate the mission to Reza.

The Senator pays Reza and his boys a huge amount to kidnap the son of his political opponent. During the mission which somehow was not fully successful, "The young man had struggled, pushed Joe aside and taken off. Reza had raised the gun, the one he had got from Moses- something the Senator had contributed to the mission" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 216). Unfortunately, it backfires. The senator is disappointed that his plan to kidnap his opponent's son does not work. He is very angry with Reza and Moses his PA does not hesitate to communicate it during his phone conversation with Reza, "You have bungled this job big time. Oga will be very disappointed. Let the girl go" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 217).

However, after some time, Moses calls and gives another instruction to Reza, "Well, go and bring her back. Your new instruction is to hold on to her" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 220). This shows that the senator is not one who easily gives up on his life ambition. He follows it to a conclusion unlike when they are expected to develop the senatorial district which they represent. Alhaji Munkaila, Hajia Binta's son is also not left out in the heat of the impending elections. He complains aloud to his sister, Hureira when he is constantly bombarded with calls from the politicians who need foreign currency, "It's time for politics. All these politicians are busy collecting as much money as they can find *wallahi*" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 229). Munkaila works with the *Bureau de Change*. Mallam Haruna, on his visit to woo Hajia Binta continues to lament the insensitivity of the politicians towards the plight of the masses. He desires that the bad politicians be eradicated from the face of the earth, "When you have

some mystery men running around and shooting down people or throwing grenades at them, sometimes you want them to just focus on the politicians and leave the masses to their poverty, but no" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 279). Reza and his boys continue to hold on to the girl they abducted when the ploy to abduct the senator's opponent's son failed. The Senator instructs them to hold on to the girl as a plan B. However, time goes by and they do not receive word from the Senator. The girl who is a niece to the Senator's opponent is only on holiday in Nigeria being a student studying in the West. She constantly falls sick and refuses to eat her food during her captivity. Also, Reza's boys keep troubling Reza to collect the balance of their payment from the Senator. However, Senator clearly does not plan to pay them until he works out something using the girl in the thugs' custody. Reza is forced to explain to his boys that, "We are holding Leila for the senator not because he wants the ransom, but because her uncle, Alhaji Bakori, is his rival for the control of the party in his zone. The longer we hold the girl, the more he distracts his rival and takes control of the party ahead of the elections" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 297).

In the middle of all these troubles, Reza incidentally kills Alhaji Mumkiala when he barges into Reza in his mother's house. Reza did not mean to kill him. He only tried to extricate himself from Munkaila's angry pursuit. Munkaila had heard rumours of his mother's illicit affair with the hooligan, Reza. Following the murder, Reza becomes a fugitive. In his moments of regrets especially of the accidental murder, he mutters to his friend Gattuso, "I don't know if we can fix this, Gattuso. But I will talk to the senator and see what he can do" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 332). Unfortunately, the senator is also scheming on how to get Reza and his boys and silence them permanently. This is to save himself the embarrassment of being reported as the sponsor of the kidnap in case the boys are arrested. He invites the police officer and gives him some wads of notes, "I want these boys found. I don't want them interrogated. Never. I suppose you know what to do" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 334).

Incidentally, Reza runs to the senator for protection at the same time that the senator is scheming to eliminate him so that the world won't hear that he has a hand in the kidnap of his opponent's niece and a failed attempt at the kidnap of his son. Reza innocently pleads with the senator to use his political powers to protect him from prosecution by the law but the senator single handedly handles his execution of Reza after deceiving him about protecting him. He has no mercy in his heart for Reza rather he thinks, "Reza had been loyal and would continue to be, he knew, but he had become a liability" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 336).

Conclusion and Findings

Elections in Nigeria have been plagued with violence. As a result, the society is turned into a theatre of constant political violence which becomes unhealthy for any meaningful development of Nigeria. This paper reveals that electoral violence seems to have become worse in the contemporary political dispensation in Nigeria. This has led to unquantifiable effects especially ranging from economic sufferings, poverty and underdevelopment on a large scale. It has marred the stability and tranquility of the Nigerian State. It is therefore recommended that it is a phenomenon that must be extinguished and eradicated by all and sundry. Education of the young population is a veritable tool to achieve the much-needed change of mindset and corresponding poverty which leave the youths vulnerable thereby reducing them to easy prey in a corrupt political enclave. This is the only way development and advancement can be attained in Nigeria. The people and government of Nigeria should fight political corruption head-on to end electoral violence in the country.

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