

Votes - Commercialization in Nigeria: A Crime Against Sustainable Democracy

Authors : Oluwasanmi Lawrence Adesuyi, Igbekoyi Kayode Emmanuel

Abstract : This study examined vote - commercialization during elections among the voters in Nigeria, a series of elections in Ekiti State, Southwestern Nigeria. Democracy in Nigeria that came to replace the unwanted ruling and dictating mission of the military government has been facing a societal terror "crime of votes commercialization" that stands in jeopardy against its sustainability in Nigeria. Social exchange and action-bound theories were employed as the theoretical framework. Forty-Eight in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and case studies were conducted with purposively selected respondents in the three senatorial districts that captured the sixteen local governments of the state. The results show that really commercialization of votes has become the order of the day in all series of electioneering among Ekiti people. Also, it was recorded that true democracy is no longer allowed to triumph as a result of vote buying that allows the highest bidder to be the winner. The result also shows that this attitude is not limited to only one political party or one candidate but involved all the political parties that participated in Election. It has become a frequent idea among the electorates during every festive period of election in Ekiti State. The tyrannical attitude has been given a nickname to suit the conditional situation of votes commercialization - (Diboki o se obe), which means vote and have a pot of soup, this implies that you will get money to take care of yourself and the family when you vote and collect money on the vote you cast, notwithstanding the money is being collected from all candidates that participated in the election, but the highest bidder has the day. The main challenge this has on democracy is that the contestants challenge the result of the election results based on the act of vote commercialization. Also, those that bought people's votes with a huge amount of money relent on their democratic promises. The study showed that the crime of vote commercialization that threatens democracy must be addressed for sustainability.

Keywords : crime, democracy, jeopardy, military, sustainability, votes-commercialization

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