

AMBROSE ALLI UNIVERSITY,
P.M.B 14, EKPOMA, EDO STATE

EKPOMA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

VOLUME 6, NO. 3, NOVEMBER, 2019 ISSN: 1595-904X

SPECIAL CONFERENCE EDITION

EKPOMA JOURNAL

OF

SOCIAL SCIENCE

OLUME 6, NO. 3, NOVEMBER,2019

ISSN 1595-904X

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EVALUATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR: THE CONTEMPORARY TREND

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ABSTRACT
The political parties and political actors are some of the vital instruments of attaining societal goals of democratic principles for peace and stability .Issues of ethnic and partisan politics has been a problem, as it relates to questions and issues of political ideologies. This paper examines some of the issues that have been seen affecting the true practice of political parties and its activities towards the democratic trend of a society.The questions surrounding the issues of politics and governance in developing countries were also reviewed. These issues are seen as an aberration that have characterized politics and political behaviour especially in the aspect of transparency and fulfilling its purpose of existence. The paper argues that the transition of developing nature of states largely depends on the political structures, party actors and the nature of constitutionalism following the level of democratic awakening. The paper concludes that politics and political behaviour are all human factors that play a vital role in the development of contemporary societies. They drive the wheel of nations towards its goal attainment. The paperrelied on documentary and primary sources of data collection for empirical analysis.The study therefore recommends that political leaders should always rule with credibility in such a way that national interest and values always supersede that of personal interest.

Keywords *– Development, Ethnicity, Partisan Politics, Political Behaviour, Political Parties.*

1.1 Introduction

The attitude towards partisan politics and the dynamics of actual political behavior exhibited by political parties relatively deviates from expected adherence to the constitutional ethics of politics. When issues of acceptance of polices, safe, efficient and ethnic factors are at stake, the political parties will continue to struggle endlessly in an effort to maintain a system that works. The analysis is situated in the context of political parties and partisan political behavior in contemporary societies and developing nations.

Recent research of empirical evidence shows that most of the political parties are more or less, not too active in playing their instrumental role in the political system, such as unifying, simplifying and stabilizing the political process. This is however traced to the problem of ethnic politics that have been dominated by tribalism. The rising clamour for political development

needs re-structuring and correcting the abnormalities in the center of polity to address the flaws in our political system.

The fundamental problem of governance that has generated the continual state of crises in the political system is that the electoral body of Nigeria government has failed as a deliberative institution. They have not resolved conflict in a reasonable manner that undercuts effective public policy. The electoral crisis most times are also caused and generated by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The political parties as in our present political system has a particular goal oriented vision different from the general believes and public views of what they actually represent. They are merely composed of different groups with selfish and personal goal-oriented. They rely and mainly respect their party leaders who always in their usual ways appoint whoever they want to represent their party as their various standard bearers who must in turn be loyal to the so called party dictators that in turn recognized their loyalist.

The electorate has not viewed them in the above ways has just an option to wait for the next election. They rely on elections though they have less control over what happens there after the casting of their votes. The electoral institutions as a result, are less likely to be as homogeneous as bureaucracies since they are less able to use the normal means that is generally accepted. The government and electoral body to resolve goal conflict with the informed public is exacerbated by development of the continual campaign for office. Party candidates now start their campaigns a minimum of two years before the election through different strategies carved out to get the public supports in future election. Party and congress members campaign, raise money, and run for office on a continual basis.

They manipulate the general public with unrealistic manifestos and bribery. It has also attracted individuals with high level of campaigning skills to now vie for political positions but lacks the skills that are valuable in governance. They now come up with policies that have contradictory goals, and these are left for electoral body to effect. Political problem is then enhanced by what is described as a decline in commitment to the institutions of governance. This decline is identification results in less difference to constitutional rules, leads to more personal attack on other members and the electoral body. More confrontation and less cooperation, and more concern with party laws and thus electoral benefits rather than the general policy benefits. The process of party selection has its own limitation for the general benefit, i.e. primary elections are replaced by imposition of candidates to party members.

Overtime, it has been seen how so many political parties in election have imposed candidates against the will of their members. There were also reported cases where many party members were accused by their party chieftains and leaders of similar offence of imposition of candidates. All these have similar consequences, they as various political representatives directly or indirectly had to meet the test of personal loyalty to the party leaders instead of the constitutions and the general people they represent.

Unwilling and unable to resolve political and electoral conflict, when people opt for policy action will in turn leads to more fearful and deadly conflict. Meier (1994) calls this politics of sin. The corrupt processes of political recruitment now leads to politicians competing with each other to adopt more extreme policies different from the normal tempering role of bureaucracy, the application of expertise to policy and policy proposals is lacking. Little rational deliberation is done, and the policies that are normally adopted are likely to fail because either the policy problem is not properly addressed or the policy itself is poorly designed.

Steven, and Russell, (2001), also said policy failure then leads to greater cynicism among the

public cynicism in turn leads to a renewed quest for magic bullets – those policies that will somehow quickly are cheaply solve the problem. For example solving crime by building more jails, improving education by relying on vouchers; balancing the budget by eliminating waste, fraud, and corruption, and reinventing government by contracting out services and are all current magic bullets . The way and manner in which political elites and party leaders handle political problems determines the impact parties may have on national integration in particular and political development in general. The main aims of the paper is to evaluate the operating nature of political parties in recent. Accessing through empirical analysis public behaviour in relation to voting perspectives. It impact on social political development of Nigeria in a quest towards sustainable development.

For the purpose of analytical clarity below are some conceptual sub-explanatory variables of the contemporary trend in the political system.

1.2. Issues of Political Leaders and Parties Abnormalities

Achebe (2005) had faulted the present political structures with what he said Nigerians must do away with the present system of godfatherism – an archaic, corrupt practice in which individuals with lot of money and time to spare (many of them half-baked, poorly educated thugs) sponsor their chosen candidates and push them right through to the desired political position, bribing, threatening, and on occasion, murdering any opposition on the process.

Today, we have a system where only those individuals with the means of capital and who can both pay the exorbitant application fee and fund a political campaign can vie for certain positions especially for key positions like Presidential, Governorship, Senatorial, House of Representatives and Chairmanship positions. It would not surprise a close observer to discover that in this insincere system, the same unsavory characters who have destroyed the country and looted the treasury and the nation are the ones able to run for the presidency.

The selection of leaders in Nigeria during election has often been characterized with election rigging, violence, and intimidation of the general public mostly the electorate, particularly by those in power or party thugs and agents with the means of the rich and the influential. There is also another unpleasant factor of the violence associated with partisan politics that is often designed to keep balanced, well-educated, fair-minded Nigerians away from politics. It can then be said that the masses /followership, do not have a say as to how they feel concerning the reality of politics and choice of leadership, because there is not a true democratic process. For example, we have seen and experienced recently the inflated and outrageous prices for the obtainment of ticket for the presidential position for primaries in the just concluded presidential election of February 2019 by virtually all the political parties in the just concluded general elections.

Another issue of thought is non - compliance with the constitution and Court/Judicial pronouncements by the various political leaders as exhibited recently in some States Houses of Assembly. On the 19th of November 2014, the police invaded the National Assembly and started tear-gassing members of the National Assembly that has to do with the defection of some members from one party to another. Similarly, we have seen in some State House of Assemblies e.g. Edo State House of Assembly, Ebonyi State House of Assembly, Rivers State House of Assembly and Ekiti APC Lawmaker were a parallel government/ assembly was formed because of the same problem of defection of members from one party to another that resulted to an open confrontation among members, fighting and some hospitalized with threats of assassinations

and kidnaps of close relatives. (Independent and Edo- Broadcasting Television Stations respectively and The Punch March 20th, 2014)

Other area of concern resulting from political abnormalities is expressed below in an interview with Ghalli (2015) in Punch Newspaper. When asked why not in competitive politics again, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1999 to 2003, has this to say about to Punch Newspaper interviewer, expressing his regrets of not impeaching the former president then, Olusegun Obasanjo. In his words, "it is sad that things have come to this situation that the political parties have become captives and most of them in the National Assembly of 1999-2003, have not been in competitive politics while they were struggling to capture political parties. They did and because there have been no internal democracy; most of them who are in charge of these parties have never allowed any election take place within these parties. What they do is year after year during congresses, they just write names of ward executives, local government executives that will serve them and their purposes. Anytime anybody wants to stand for election, he has to pay these godfathers who own the party and I take exception to that". More of his quotes, "the greatest threat to the national security of Nigeria is the absence of internal democracy that is what people fail to understand". Going by the above analysis, the situation is further worsen by the party policy of judicial prescriptions. The aggrieved members are indirectly prohibited from going to court by their various party's rules and regulations. I call this contemporary disenfranchisement. The Nigeria human right body, National Rights Commission (February, 2015) confirmed 61 incidences of election violence which occurred in 22 States with 58 people killed before the general election. The Independent electoral commission lamented the significant number of violence incident recorded across the country. In Lagos 66 violence incidents were recorded. Incidents were ballot papers were openly stolen, death or killings and INEC office in Rivers State set ablaze.

1.3. Analyzing the Political behaviour.

Nigeria had continually enjoyed an uninterrupted democratic system since 29th of May, 1999 in her fourth republic. With this kind of political education and experience, one would have expected a better and more practical matured political and electoral process in Nigeria political system. Unfortunately, what is seen at every election every four years to either refrain some leaders as incumbent government or as Nigeria decides to make a change of government is what is described as a degenerating political system and decaying societal ethics. Before now, a close observer of Nigeria political system will agree to the fact that Nigeria actually had unstable political system featured with a lot of military features of intervention or interruption.

As we speak today, what is actually seen is a feature of subverted democratic principles and diverted features of development. For a better understanding, it will be analyze in sections.

Firstly are political parties. Most political parties have almost abandoned their general functions and purposeful unionism to be subverted to personal and selected elite's opinions and dictates. What we have seen happening now are elites political manipulation, exploitation and the outright subversion and disregard of the very conditions necessary for political development. This is featured with massive rigging replaced with supposed free and fair electoral pools.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the political party represents a vital symbol or element in assessing the role of actors and how it is interrelated with other structures in an institution. If election is now all about rigging one's way to a position as a leader, how are we then sure of credible leaders

for the future? A political party represents an important means of producing leaders for nations to further ensure development for the country in which they represent.

Secondly is the voting attitude of citizens or voters. The attitudinal assessment of voters in an election especially in the last few years is what can be described as subversion of voting rules, laws or ethics to personal and immediate benefits. It is well known that voters must register before you can vote in an election. In the same vein, voters are expected to obey electoral rules and regulations, such as being orderly in conduct and on some occasions to report cases of electoral malpractices to the necessary agencies. This day, voters collaborates with the alignment of different party agents to shun the electoral laws. Orderliness is replaced by violence, shooting of guns of all kinds. Scaring away of voters and snatching of ballot boxes have replaced the supposed free and fair polls.

With the last election that brought card readers of electronic voting, a new style of electoral malpractice was introduced. Before then, food items, money and other material things were shared to the party and interested public members to support their candidate. But today at the voting centers on election days, an open or secret campaign is the order of the day. Voters are given money instantly which ranges from one thousand five hundred, five thousand naira to any amount compelling voters to vote for their candidates. The power of the amount a particular party is able to pay determines the number of voters that can vote for their candidate. This means the control power of the masses in voting now resides in the political parties' ability to pay higher amount. The question now is who is to be blamed, the masses, the leaders or the political parties?

Before you give an answer to the above puzzle question, you need to also know this. It must be noted that most of the educated elites who are civil servants have lost hope in the political system, as a result of loss of confidence in the past leaders and the electoral processes. Majority of them no longer go to cast their vote. This has resulted to the problem of political apathy established in the system and the majority of the voters in election polls are now mainly the less educated people, the peasants and the participant political members and the aggrieved unionist whose aims are for double standard

These are citizens who for many years in their life have not benefitted anything from the so called government, whom they pay their loyalty to as a state. They do not belong to the salary earners of any kind. Any decision or policy for development, such as minimum wages does not in any way affect them. The only means in which they would have felt the government's existence is through the provision of good governance of providing the basic necessities of life, such as pipe borne water, electricity, housing assistance, good roads schemes, loans and subsidies for business and farmers.

Unfortunately, most of these things are never available or in place for their consumption. The few incentives coming from the government are never monitored to the grass root level to ensure that it gets to the targeted right people. Most of all these are shared amongst the party members and given at a cheaper rate to those who can afford them. The masses, the people are now forced to go back to get it the hard way of tilling the earth for their daily survival or any other means of livelihood. The unemployed graduate also falls into this category, most of which are used as party thugs. The two thousand naira (#2000) or above they then get from the field are ignorantly celebrated and seen as rare privileges that can help them irrespective of it adverse effect to the development of the nation. To them, nothing to protect, the government are so far from them. They are directly or indirectly made to be more honest and obedient to some communal lords. They also pay more loyalties to ethnics, laws, and dictates that can from time to time be of little

benefits to them without much sweat. To majority, it does not pay to obey the constituted authorities as the center that does not recognize their existence but the party, clubs, communities, godfathers and their community leaders. Some of these personalities have actually performed the supposed duty of a government to their people in order to in turn get their political support. For instance, the abandoned pipe borne water is replaced with borehole in the community. Some roads are repaired by private individuals. Youth are promised of getting jobs if voted into powers only to party members. Transformers are given to the communities especially during elections. Dilapidated primary and secondary schools are repaired. Town halls are built for communities for political reasons. All these are done not necessary to alleviate the suffering of the people but, for personal interest. They are dehumanized and subjected to abject poverty for so many years with the bad governance displayed since independence. When this is continually repeated, it becomes a tradition which has been the game of the day.

2.1. Accessing the Ethnic Politics and its Effects towards Sustainable Development

Can we actually sustain what was actually never in place? Ethnicity is a social phenomenon that is featured with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. It's usually associated with groups of similar or common language, religion, national origins and cultural background. In the words of Idahosa (2007), Ethnicity is often misconstrued as ethnocentrism, which means centering attention on one's ethnic groups as superior to or more important than the other ethnic groups. Ethnicity exists amongst different ethnic groups and a leader of such ethnic cleavages stink more to such identified groups of loyalty of interest of same brotherhood. According to Nader Angha (2002) sees it as empires which are by nature multi-ethnic but often only one ethnicity dominates the central administration (the leader) which makes no pretense of representing the interests of the majority of the population.

That Nigeria is a country that has experienced and suffered from the problem of political violence is an understatement of its major effects to her quest for sustainable development and national unity since her independence in October 1st 1960. The issue of political violence has constituted a great set back in Nigeria political history. The insecurity syndrome has also constituted a huge barrier to its sustainable development and national unity. We had series of violence resulting from mere physical assault of minor effects of electoral violence to that of major effects against system development and national unity leading to several attempt of succession. Most of the leaders' right from independence have handled issues of national interest with levity and be more serious and interested in issues of ethnic's cleavages. Most elites of numerous ethnic groups have always played politics of tribalism and nepotism.

For example, the politics of tribalism and ethnic loyalties has dominated the major issues of development and sustainability at stake. The issues of leadership roles in an attempt to finding sustainable development in terms of political crises are of two main precedents. Firstly, of what bases do we actually draw the yardstick of a leadership with a clear focus for outstanding governance with a view towards sustainable development? Secondly, of what means do we actually reconcile with the issues of good governance and that of inclusive governance of democratic precedent?

In the pursuit of numerous tasks of interests that involves and includes different stake holders is narrowed down to values. No matter the pressure that is mounted on a leader resulting from agitation from subjects or citizens of the various ethnic groups. The leaders will certainly act or perform based on the following perceptions:

i. Political leaders as pressure groups
ii. Political leaders as ethnics cleavages
iii. Political religious leaders
iv. Political leaders as wholistic, Structuralists, with vision and call to leadership Role

(i) Political Leaders as Pressure Groups

It is well known that pressure group's works for the satisfaction of its members and not the general public. Pressure groups are known to be an organized group of people with a similar or joint interest and focus, whose aims and objectives are just to particularly influence the policy of government through different strategies to the benefits and satisfaction of their members.

We have different kinds of pressure groups. They act according to the demands or needs of their member in which they exist to satisfy. Therefore, a leader who sees himself or herself as one who represent a particular organized or antagonistic group acts only to satisfy such groups. If such a leader comes up as local, state or national leader, they are more focus to meeting up the needs and benefits of the groups being represented.

Such leader as a president, governor, senator, minister, ambassador, members of the state houses or local government chairmen are bound to the ethics ties of their various unions. In other words, leaders who lack the visionally qualities and power of a leader will only be there as a figure head leader undermining the general needs of the general people. That is, national interest, welfare becomes secondary in the area of execution, development that is cut across the nation will then be scarce in all areas. Most times agitations comes up from different sections of the country ignorantly believing that and hoping for a changed for an improvement of life endeavour. Unfortunately, such expectations and believes are never considered by such leaders who came in only to rule for the benefits and satisfaction of their members.

(ii) Political leaders who came with more high esteem to their ethnic cleavages

In the history of Nigeria, it has been observed that most leaders had played the politics of ethnicity and tribalism. Ethnicity, usually takes the form of loyalty to a common or particular culture and tribe. Public policies are distributed with tribal features rather than loyalty to the state at large. Most people now perpetrate themselves to be more loyal and obedient to a particular ethnic group which is political independence with similar culture, language, believing on their leaders for the satisfaction and fulfillment of their needs.

A leader who forget that he has a leadership call to answering all questions coming out from the sections of the country has failed as a leader. Hence, a leader with the little believes of only acting in accordance with communal character limits the development of a nation at large. Such a leader lacks the main quality of a good leader with a clear percent of rational policies.

Such leaders are always associated with ethnic consciousness that determines the numerous or various policies. There is always a frequent interaction between the leader and the recognized groups. Loyalty cleavages to such demands and agitations make them received quick responses by the incumbent leader. It is usually believed that ethnic associations have a lot of benefits. They believe that they are more secured, have opportunity to get mutual aid and other benefits like appointments or political power. Leaders are therefore made to act in the process of governance, is turned towards ethnic loyalties and lines of agitations. Political powers and other benefits are also shared according to ethnic interest and tribal loyalties. Professionalism of various sub-

sections of leadership are often undermined.

(iii) Political Religious Leaders

Some leaders come with a vision of religious aims as the main reason and yardstick for policy. For exam most policy or laws are done or processed alongside with religious background without any recourse to other religious groups.

(iv). The Wholistic Political Leaders with a Difference

This kind of leaders are not actually common and are often known with their leadership styles and mainly common in developed countries. Few of such African leaders were only disturbed and influenced by the kind of leadership styles in existence. It's being more valued due to the level of political development. The society can easily build their confidence on this type of leader with visionary spirits and possesses the motivational attitude to rule and develop their states towards a higher and sustainable level of development.

They are featured with policies of general development and sectional interest is minimal if at all present. Such policies are pursued for the general development of the state for they are easily identified with the good governance policy featured in their government.

Sectional, tribal or ethnics loyalties are usually silent in their policy of rulership. Effort is rather geared towards a wholistic system of development that is cut across the nation as a whole.

These kind of leaders share their policy formulation across the nation not according to party loyalists or ethnic and tribal cleavages. Development is pursued with a scale of preference or with ultimate priority of the nations need. The demands from the general public seeking the attention of the government are usually handled through structural strategies mechanism. This kind of system of rulership usually attracts more support and is more or less featured with good governance appreciated by the people. No section of the country is left aside in terms of political, economic, social and religious development. Leadership styles and policy is seen to be a clear indication of inclusive system of government.

They rule as leaders representing the entire systems, nation or state in which they are elected to represent. This is usually seen more in their methods of administration and achievements. Unlike the other kind of leaders already identified, they are known not to represent some selected sections of the country, state and within the local government all for good and general development of the nation.

According to a renowned scholar; for governance to enjoy contemporary relevance, it must be qualified as good. Good governance is synonymous with good government which entails certain elements as explained below.

(a) Participation: Often times, leaders as presidents, governors and local government chairmen ignore this very area of inclusiveness to main political powers. It is the involvement of stakeholders in priority setting, policy-making and resource allocation as well as access to public goods and services.

(b) Equity and Fairness: This includes the application of rules in equitable manner to all irrespective of one's class or caste.

(c) Transparency: Clarity of public decision and openness to scrutiny of citizens.

(d) Decency or Respect for the Rule of Law: Enactment and administration of rules without comprising the people.

(e) Accountability: To hold rulers answerable for their action or inaction and depending on the answer to be subjected to potential sanction both negative and positive.

(f) Efficiency and Effectiveness: Transacting public business in a manner that produces reasonable and sustainable development in the state.

These are actually the features that are always seen or identified to good governance in any developing country.

2.2. Cultural Effects

The kind of culture that has been in place is also responsible for the political violence we have today. The kind of cultural orientation that is exhibited by the populace is an indication of shortage of political socialization. Culture is more a symbol of identity of the people. The political culture here refers to values, beliefs and attitudes that condition political behaviour. The level of political culture to a great extent also influences political socialization, which could be of different degree. The level of political culture can attest to the fact as of why and how should people behave in a political system.

Political culture is therefore the set of attitude, norms, orientation and belief system which predispose actors in the political system to a political actor. Culture can be divided into three main aspects namely; cultural ideas, cultural institutions and cultural materials. In other words, if the political orientation of a system is of the parochial, political development will greatly be affected. When it has gone beyond mere political culture to the participant stage of culture, there is always a conflict. In this stage, the cognitive, affective and evaluative orientation will in turn leads to certain levels of violence and expected political development of societal norms will be far from achievement.

2.3. Values and Interests

One of the big essence of politics is inclusiveness and greatly appreciated by the people. The central issues of values and interests is the soul call to state loyalty and purpose of existence and obedience. That is the strength and weakness of a system is comparatively based on its ability to meet up with the standard of interests and values. It is usually seen as parameters for comparative analyses. When we say or ask the question; what interest do the people seek? How do they seek the interest? What value underline the operation of their political system? Who is and when are people allowed to seek and acquire powers are questions of values. How people seek and acquire powers is a question of values.

When an election is conducted as we have today, it is based on the essence of values. The issues of free and fair elections are references of values. The concepts of electoral credibility, processes, conduct, its outcome, the screening of candidates are all issues of values. Also, the issues of leadership and the basis at which we draw the yardstick of a good or bad leadership are also based on values. The basis of a failed and succeeded system and political support and opposition in politics are also values. This means our political references are usually associated with values and interest.

Interest on the other hand, connotes all the issues of conflicts which are the main ingredients of politics. Such as competitions, struggles, agreements and disagreements all centers on interest. No wonder politics is defined as conflict and struggles by some scholars. Here comes in the importance or relevance of the above phenomenon to the discussion in progress. The quest for political goods is one of the sources of conflict or style for politics. These are boiled down to interest, because of interest at stake are usually more than resources available and such interests

are sometimes conflicting and numerous more than solution to resolve such issues needed.
The parameter usually adopted must be that which is generally accepted by the people. It's in turn used to resolved conflicts and struggles arising from the pursuit. Hence such parameters for resolving such conflicts are goals which is the point of convergence of interest and values. The concept of majority rules somehow falls on values and can be changed from time to time. In other words interest and values are not permanent. One of the values in Nigeria has been unity. The interest to be one premise, that we should be united. Nigeria had a civil war because of interest. Another interest among so many is stability. Every political system cherish stability of progress for sustainability. And other critics have argued that what is in a system that doesn't equitably rewards all to be stable, change of stability will them be of values for such a system.
For example, a government of nine years, how was stability maintained? Whose interest was been served? And the big question for thought of why do people resist change or agitate for a change? All centers on our interest and values.

3. Conclusion

Political parties and especially the electoral system are very important in the assessment of a nation's political development. To a great extent, this is the area were the general public demonstrate attitude toward the political system. Political parties all over the world have been recognized as indispensable democratic structures through which political leaders emerge.
The party system and political parties are important, apart from their indispensability in liberal democratic arrangements. It is a vital instrument or structure of attaining societal goals of a sustainable development for societal unity.
The parties, in the spirit of genuine self-reliance, were expected to emerge from among the people, by the people and for the people. The political parties are expected to perform interrelated functions which may include contributing to national integration and political stability of the nation. They ought to follow the respected rules that guides their structures, functions and principles. It is done for an expected goal of solid democratic systemic achievement for the nation.
In several states, the election result sheets were allowed to get into the wrong hands. Though the announced results retained the parties in power in many states, there were strong allegations that most of the results did not adequately reflect the will of the electorate. Theseanomalies have diverse effects on the growth of our nation and hence ignited post-election violence in several states, thus creating credibility crises for the exercise.

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