

Research Paper

Negligence and Other Factors that Affect Voting Behaviour in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria (1999-2016).

Dr. Linus C. Nnamani

Department of Political Science, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *The study examined negligence and other factors like poverty, illiteracy, ignorance as well as other issues that affect voting behaviour of citizens of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State from 1999 to 2016. The researcher used questionnaire, oral interview and group discussions for the collection of data for the study. Participatory Theory of Democracy as propounded by Jean Jacques Rousseau was used in the discussions. The major findings of this study show that inability of successive administrations/governments to provide social amenities in the local government made the citizens to term themselves as the neglected group. This long time negligence leads to their high level of political apathy. Other findings include that illiteracy; deprivation and ignorance lead to low level of citizens' political awareness and therefore their apathetic attitude towards voting and other essential election processes. The effects of youths, self-esteem, personality, party ideology, religion etc also affect the behaviour of the citizens of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State and Nigerians as a country.*

Keywords: *Negligence, poverty, voting Behaviour, Nkanu East, Enugu State, Nigeria.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The study investigated the factors affecting voting behaviour of citizens and residents of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu States of Nigeria has fourteen (14) electoral wards. The factors that affect peoples' voting behaviour are complex. [1] stated that social and political exclusion followed by poverty are inhibitive of political processes in our society, because the poor are always weak and apathetic and more preoccupied with the activities of survival than to participate in political affairs of their localities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

This research examined negligence and other factors that affect the voting behaviour of the people of Nkanu East Local Government of Enugu State. Citizens participating in the political processes of their localities are a fundamental issue in the development and sustenance of democracy in any community or society. Therefore the citizens and residents of every society need to participate in political processes in order to influence the public affairs and policies of their localities for their benefits. This could either be to present themselves for political position in order to be voted for or to be involved in supporting and voting into offices their preferred candidates. It is known that when majority of the people support any issue affecting them, they would try to protect and defend such issue or condition. Much study has not been done to establish the factors that influence voting behaviour of citizens and residents of Nkanu East Local Government of Enugu State. This gap in literature constitutes the aim which this study will fulfill. This research will proffer solution to the following questions.

- (a) Does negligence affects the voting behaviour of citizens and residents of Nkanu East Local Government Area?
- (b) What are the other factors that affect voting behaviour of the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?
- (c) Why do those that registered and voted during elections in Nkanu East Local Government desired to participate in those elections?
- (d) What is the percentage of those that voted during the elections to the number that registered for the election (< 50%)
- (e) What are the hindrances that discouraged some people from participating in the elections?
- (f) How do we correct those issues/challenges so as to improve citizens' political participation and better development?

1.2 Relationship between negligence and other factors affecting voting behaviour.

The Relationship between negligence and political participation especially in voting behaviour of citizens is obvious. Long time negligence, excruciating poverty in many societies of developing nations, compel citizens to keep away from political processes and face how to feed themselves and their families. [2] posits that there exists in cybernetic feedback interaction between poverty and the democratic processes. Therefore long time negligence of local areas by successive governments results in high level poverty which incapacitates the poor peasants in participation in political processes including voting. The primary concern of such citizens is to feed their families, educate their children even to primary or junior secondary education level, as well as provision of their health needs. Illiteracy and its attendance; ignorance also hamper effective participation of those local people in the democratic processes of their localities.[3] maintains that majority of Nigerians are still poor and have developed the attitude that government is indifferent to their needs, and the current system of long term negligence in Nigeria generates,

intensifies and consolidates widespread poverty while enriching a few at the expense of the vast majority of citizens. That condition cannot generate and sustain participatory democracy in the society. Instead it will lead to epileptic and stunted democratic growth. Concept of democracy implies that majority of the citizens should participate, and have the ultimate authority to govern. Their views and votes should count and determine their leader(s) as well as guide government activities and provide good public policies.

1.3 Participatory Theory of Democracy.

Different scholars like [4] analyzed democracy, under group theory (pluralism) and elitist. Pluralism is of the view of majority while the elitists think of ordinary citizens just vote at intervals for the actors and programs. Participatory democracy calls that democracy has its ingredients and it regards people participation as the basic principle of democracy. It denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in governmental processes affecting their lives. When individuals and groups are actively involved in the process of formation and implementation of public policies and decisions, they protect and preserve those decisions for the betterment and development of the society. However poverty alienates the majority of the rural communities from participating in the political process of their areas. This implies that long term negligence and the accompanying poverty have strong effect on the voting behavior of the citizens in political issues. [5] stated that even though economic factor like poverty plays vital role in voting behaviour and other human decisions, it is not the sole determinant.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher obtained primary data through observation, interview and use of questionnaire. Secondary source came from books, journals, and other statistical documents.

III. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

TABLE 1: HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS.

Highest Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	50	25.00
Secondary	105	52.50
Tertiary	45	22.50
Total	200	100.00

Source: Field work 2016.

TABLE 1 indicates that twenty five percentage(25%) of the respondents have first school leaving certificates as their highest educational qualifications. 52% of the respondents have secondary school certificate (W.A.S.C, G.C.E, N.E.C.O, and NABTEB) as their highest educational qualifications. Those with the secondary school certificates constitute the majority of the respondents. Only 22.5% of the respondents attended tertiary institutions (OND, NCE, HND, B.sc. and above). As the majority of the respondents (52.5%) have secondary school certificates as their highest educational qualifications, the implication is that majority of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State have not attained high level of educational qualifications that can accord them access to good and gainful employment opportunities capable of reducing poverty and facilitating political awareness, as well as enhancing political participation.

TABLE 2: OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
SS&UD Students	40	20.00
Civil Servants	37	18.50
Business Operators	43	21.50
Farming	80	40.00
Total	200	100.00

Source: Field work 2016

SS - Senior Secondary UD – Undergraduate

TABLE 2 depicts the occupation of the respondents where forty (40) representing twenty percent (20%) are students (either senior secondary or undergraduates). Thirty seven of the respondents representing 18.5% of them are civil servants. The business operators (mainly small one man business) among the respondents are forty three (43) representing 21.5% of the respondents. Majority of the respondents, eighty percent (80%) representing forty percent (40%) are subsistence farmers. They do not have access to adequate capital to improve their work. This also shows the high level of poverty in the local government.

TABLE 3: TYPE OF HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITIES:

Type of house	Frequency	Percentage
Single Room	16	8
Two Rooms	64	32
I-house with 3 rooms	82	41
Bungalow up to 4 rooms	30	15
Duplex	8	4
Total	200	100

Source: Field work 2016

TABLE 3 shows the classification of housing in the communities and eight (8%) of them are single rooms. 32% of the houses are two rooms apartment. 41% of the houses are I-house with three rooms and they are majority of the houses in the communities. 15% of the houses are bungalows, while 4% are duplexes

TABLE 4: SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER.

From which of these do you get drinking water	Frequency	Percentage
Stream	26	13
Well	124	62
Public bore holes	40	20
Tap in the house	0	0
Public tap	0	0
Tank water vendors	0	0
All of the above	10	5
None of the above	0	0
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

TABLE 4 shows that much more than half of the respondents, representing Sixty two percent (62%) make use of well water as their source of drinking water. Only twenty percent (20%) of the respondents stated that they use public bore holes as the main source of their drinking water. Twenty six respondents representing thirteen percent (13%) of the respondents agree that they use stream water as their main source of drinking water. Five percent (5%) of those studied make use of all the listed sources of water. The implication of the result of the findings is that the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area are faced with avoidable water borne diseases leading to debilitating state of health. There are no tank water vendors in the Local Government Area.

TABLE 5 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN NKANU EAST L.G.A

Do you have electricity supply in your community?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	15.00
No	40	20.00
Only part has	70	35.00
The projects not completed	35	17.00
No hope in next future	25	12.50
Total	200	100.00

Source: Field work 2016.

TABLE 5 shows the electricity distribution in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. The table shows that 30 respondents representing fifteen percent (15%) agree that they have electricity connection, but the regularity of the light being on is usually low. Forty respondents representing twenty percent (20%) stated that their communities do not have electricity supply. Some of the respondents among this group said that thieves vandalized the wires and since then the affected area has no light. Seventy (70) respondents representing thirty five percent (35%) of them stated that only a section (part) of their community has electricity supply. Thirty five respondents or 15.5% of them reveal that the electricity project has not been completed. It is only 12.5% of the respondents, stated that there is no hope in near future of their community to have electricity. This group added that it is because government is not willing to assist them and the cost of executing the project is too high for the members to bear.

3.1 The state of Nkanu East Local Government Roads.

Regarding the roads in Nkanu East Local Government Area; the views of the respondents are about the same. The roads are bad. The roads that were tarred by Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani's administration are no longer motorable, especially during rainy seasons. Most of the respondents and those that were interviewed stated that both the state and the local governments do not rehabilitate the roads in Nkanu East local government area. Only few people argued that few of the roads are occasionally rehabilitated. This group add that the road rehabilitation were done by few rich individuals when they want to celebrate any issue or when they burry their blood relation(s). Some roads in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State are so bad especially during the rainy seasons that even car owners cannot get to their compounds with their cars. Many of them use motor cycle popularly called 'okada'. The poor rural roads condition after eighteen (18) years of uninterrupted democracy prevent any meaningful economic activities that could create wealth and reduce poverty.

3.2 Access to Health Care Facilities.

The health care center in Nkanu East local government Headquarter at Amagunze is non-functional. One would imagine what would be the state of affairs in the health centers of the component communities. Due to near absence of health care facilities in most communities in Nkanu East local government, the pregnant women in those communities are still being attended to, by the local birth attendants.

3.3 Why do those that Voted during elections in Nkanu East Local Government desired to participate?

In respect of the reasons why those that voted during elections in Nkanu East local government participated, the respondents stated as follows:

- ❖ That they were told that they would present the voters card as a condition for registration of their children in schools.
- ❖ 50% of the respondents argued that they wanted the ruling party (Peoples Democratic Party) to win again.
- ❖ Thirty percent added that they voted because their political associates/friends contested.
- ❖ Less than twenty percent of the respondents saw voting as their obligation which they owe to the state.
- ❖ They had voted for many years for successive administrations but those administrations did not appreciate the voting as nothing was done for them or their communities.
- ❖ In some communities the voters turn out had been low expect if somebody from the community was contesting.

3.4 Implementation of Poverty Reduction Policies.

Majority of the respondents stated that most of the Government Poverty Reduction Programmes were not being done or executed in the communities of Nkanu East Local Government. They added that the none-execution of those poverty reduction programmes in Nkanu East Local Government of Enugu State could be due to selfishness, corruption, mismanagement, bad leadership and lack of political will on the part of the political actors to address those poverty reduction programmes in the Local Government. Up to eighty five percentage of the population of Nkanu East Local Government Area use firewood for cooking, while about ten percent (10%) of them use kerosene as their cooking fuel.

TABLE 6: Presence of Banking Facilities in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

TABLE 6: BANKING FACILITIES IN NKANU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Is there any bank in Nkanu East L.G.A	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0
No	200	100
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey 2016.

All sources of information available to this researcher show that there is no type of bank in any part of Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State as at 2016. The above scenario is illustrative of long term negligence, lack of good economic activities which result in excruciating poverty level, poor political awareness that inhibit peoples' political participation like voting in elections.

TABLE 7 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Statement	VGE(4)	GE(3)	LE(2)	VLE(1)	EFX	X	Decision
Poverty	150(600)	30(90)	15(30)	5(5)	725	3.63	Great extent
Illiteracy	146(584)	31(93)	18(36)	5(5)	718	3.59	Great extent
Long Term Negligence	140(560)	35(45)	15(30)	10(10)	645	3.22	Great extent
Low economics activities	160(640)	30(90)	8(16)	2(2)	748	3.74	Great extent

SOURCE: compiled from field survey 2016

Grand Mean = $\frac{14.18}{4} = 3.55$

Where

VGE = very great extent

GE = great extent

LE = low extent

VLE = very low extent

Likert 4 point scale was used to reassess the above findings (as in TABLE 7), and the result confirmed that long term negligence, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance affect the peoples voting behaviour to a great extent.

3.5 Voting Behaviour in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State Nigeria; An assessment of other contributory factors.

Since 1979 elections, the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area have been voting for political parties that are very popular in the South East Geo-Political zone, (Former East Central State) which they hoped would ameliorate their poverty situation. The voting pattern in 1979 elections exhibited group solidarity among the Igbo race because they supported the Nigeria People's Party (NPP) led by the Owelle of Onitsha Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose victory they believed would better their lives. Some respondents observed that the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area vote on religious consideration like many other groups in the country. The researcher also found that it was not only negligence and poverty that influence the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area voting behaviour. The number that voted in most of the elections was found to be less than fifty percent (50%) of the number of registered voters.

Other factors that influence voting behaviour of the people of Nkanu East Local Government Area include:

- ❖ Perceived capability/popularity and competence of candidates/parties
- ❖ Influence of prominent local politicians
- ❖ Little financial inducement
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Proximity to polling stations

However, the above issues were found to be ancillary to long term negligence/poverty. At the inception of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, this research gathered that voters including those from Nkanu East Local Government were optimistic that emergence of democracy would provide opportunity to enhance their living standard and conditions. It was noted that the voters in the local government and even in other parts of the Geo-Political zone voted massively for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) into various political positions. This was because PDP was the dominant and popular party in the Local Government and many other Local Government Areas in the zone.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

This research found out that long term negligence/poverty is the prominent but not the only factor that influence voting behaviour in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria. Other contributory factors include; popularity of candidate(s)/political party, influence of Local politicians/elites, culture/tradition.

The study therefore recommends as follows:-

- (a) The political actors in position of authority should focus on the provision of electricity, good road network, portable water, provision of employment and other enabling environment that would create job opportunities, as well as realistic poverty reduction programmes. If the welfare and wellbeing of

- majority of the citizenry are taken care of, they will be motivated and enforced to have faith in democracy.
- (b) There is also need for government to conduct proper voter education in local dialect of the people for them to know the facts and gains of proper political participation.
 - (c) The citizenry need to improve on their attitude and ignore momentary material and financial inducement from political actors and agents. Once the electorates refuse those inducements, the political actors must improve on their performance.
 - (d) The institution that is responsible for the conduct of the periodic elections should strive at all times and at all levels of the process, to be substantially transparent, honest and fair in order to produce credible results that would convince the electorate. When the electorates know that only their votes would determine their leaders, such leaders must endeavour to perform well and the citizens' political participation would improve significantly.

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