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UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA.

FACULTY OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

TOPIC:

DISTORTION OF VALUE SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA

A TERM PAPER PREPARED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE COURSE GSP 104 (SOCIAL SCIENCES 11)

PRESENTED

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DISTORTION OF VALUE SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA.
DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my brothers; Emeaka, Chuigozie, Azuka, Izuchukwu, Sunday and Okechukwu Obimma, whose goodwill, prayers and positive wishful thinking is unquantifiable.

I also dedicate this work to my dear aunt Mrs. Mercy Uzoegbunam, who died on the 22nd June 2008 while I was compiling this work. May her gentle soul rest in the bosom of almighty God. Amen. And finally to everyone who will go through this paper, observe and respect good values.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have not the eloquence much enough to express the unfathomable degree of my gratitude to God for his graceful love and preservation when writing this paper and also my lecturer Mrs. Joy Ugwu for her devoted directives in seeing that this work is done appropriately. But my thanks will lack substance if I do not give special mention to my indefatigable parents Mr. Christopher and Mrs. Josephine Obimma, whose support is unquantifiable, may almighty God in his infinite mercy bless each and every one of you in Jesus name. Amen.
PREFAE

Nigeria is close to 48 years in independence, and looking thoroughly at the state of this country, one may be tempted to conclude that the society is in the woods. Research has shown that several ethnic groups have their own values; this research work critically examines the ways at which these values are distorted, with electoral malpractice as a case study.

Being a versatile one the topic of this work demands the writer to extract views from individuals, assess their opinions and apply it in writing. Actually getting the research materials for this work is not direct; only prolific and seasoned psychologists and philosophers will put this work to the best of taste.

The writer is optimistic that when good values are observed and accepted in Nigeria, many consequences of distorting these values will dwindle even in the contemporary society. So the goal of this work is to persuade people to respect good values and this society will be the best habitable one for all and sundry.
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION
‘Until the values are embraced by everyone in our country, we will continue to rue the loss of numerous benefits of a good standard of living.’

Electoral malpractice is a form of distorting the values system in any society especially our great country Nigeria. This value system has been reshaped by people who seek personal interest to the detriment of the majority, since any component that forms the structure of a well articulated value system will be geared towards the social wellbeing of the society. So this term paper actually looks into the relationship between electoral malpractice and value system in general, and how it can be distorted. So as a writer I urge everyone to embrace the good values of the society.

1.2. MEANING OF VALUE SYSTEM
Value system in this context is viewed as a function of socialization. According to the advanced oxford dictionary values is the belief about what is right and wrong and what important in life. So value system refers to the operative process of values. A value system is considered the focal point of system identity as well as a heavily defended stronghold against change. Moral values (system) are those expected standard behaviour, it demands one to behave in a particular manner. Like respect for elders, honesty, humility, helping the less privileged etc are all moral values. While standard values are those ways we appreciate and desire to actualize, like peace, beauty, efficiency and lawfulness.

Value system has to do with the norm of a particular society which is the standard of proper behaviour or a principle of right and wrong. The value system in every social system must embrace the fact that rules or a social
pattern of action or behaviour is the core concept of achieving the goals of a particular society.

1.3. MAJOR COMPONENTS OF VALUE SYSTEM.

1.3.1. Desirable and Accepted Objects: These generally mean the objects (aims and objectives) that the society appreciates most. These objects must have been those norms that are beneficial socially to the members of the intermediary society, like the fight for equity, enfranchisement, dividends of a particular system of governments and numerous societal gains. The desirable objects in Nigeria is very numerous considering the fact that the population is very enormous, but generally there are common substantive objectives of the majority in Nigerian society, like desires from government by individuals. The masses expect the government to provide them with social amenities political and electoral transparency and generally good governance. This will benefit the people massively.

1.3.2. Experiences and practices: this component of value system has to do with the way people go about their lives. The rule that governs the general practice that the society undertakes is reviewed to the advantage of the people. Like marriage rites, festivals, language arrangements and what an outsider will use to identify that society socially, and people are meant to accept them.

1.3.3 Artifact: according to advanced Oxford dictionary, artifact refers to an object that is made by a person, especially something of historical or cultural interest. The point at which artifact comes into play is the fact that some of these artifactic objects are geared towards the achievement of a beneficial
goal. This includes carved objects, dress code, and way of plaiting hair, war materials and other concrete objects.

1.3.4 Personality trait and situation: The kind of people present in a particular society is one important concept of value system. The leadership and followership of the people helps or disunites the social system of the society. To reshape the value system of the society it is the function of the prevailing economic situation of the society.

The Nigerian leadership has actually performed below expectation and as such has drastically put paid to the legitimacy of the Nigerian value system, the members of the society on the other hand are not helping matters either. In other words when the personalities and situation of a particular society are well oriented the value system of that country will thrive and vice versa.

1.3.5 Forces; the groups in a particular country like Nigeria determines the direction in which the pendulum of value system swings. Political parties, pressure group, co-operatives bodies and NGOs can be a very important determinant to the state of value system in Nigeria. Religious forces, educational groups and their likes contribute immensely, to the development of the concept of value system.

1.4. Role of value system in Nigeria

a. Control of absolute rulership; in Nigeria some traditional rulers enjoys immunity and as such are somehow above the law. The value system actually checks despotic tendencies of rulers. It enables the leaders to conform to certain values of the land and not to see themselves as institution that must be feared.
b. **Guarantee of rights**: the values in Nigeria to an extent guarantee the fundamental rights of the people, like in the electoral process in Nigeria except in some cases. These rights have already been made clear by regular value system, which imbibed the ruler and the ruled to obey it.

c. **To ensure peace**: the presence of a well organized and articulated principle of value system in a society indicates that there is peace and orderliness. It shows that minimal effort is needed in the maintenance of law and order in such state. This helps to promote patriotism, love, for one another, co-operation between the citizens and the government.

d. **Equity for all**: the general acceptance of value system in a society proves that everybody is equal. It shows that both the rich and the poor are seen as being equal and must be treated equally. This creates a sense of belonging and oneness of purpose among the people.

e. **Value system is superior**: it goes to prove that the value system is superior to everyone in some cases and to all institutions of the society. In this regard the rulers must know that his refusal to accept it could lead to a riotous situation or even war.

f. **To guard against arbitrary rule**: Again the observance of value system in a society protects the citizens from totalitarian and arbitrary ruler ship. It makes it necessary to seek redress whenever their rights are being infringed by fellow citizens and rulers.

The role of value system in Nigeria is very effective and numerous that it is practically inexhaustible, so with a well accepted and articulated value system, a stable and organized society is on the card.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1. MEANING OF DISTORTION OF VALUE SYSTEM

In Nigeria it is a normal phenomenon for things to go the way it is not supposed, government officials, civil servants, and the people are not making this society an interesting domain for human habitation, primarily because the value system has been distorted severally in Nigeria.

Distortion of value system can be defined as the twist or change of facts and ideas generally believed to be right or wrong and how important it is in life, so that they are no longer correct. In other words once the norms of the society are not observed, the value system has been distorted pronto.

2.2. MAJOR FORMS OF DISTORTING VALUE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA.

2.2.1. Economics.

When the value system is not well articulated economically, the state of things could twist the wrong way. This has to do with inequality in right and amount of work and the subsequent salaries and wages. Inability for government to protect industries from environmental and occupational hazards. Some factions do not allow equity in production and allocation of natural resources. The labour force is in the helm of this form of distortion.

2.2.2. Social.

The disabled, women and children may be molested in some areas. And it is observed that distortion of justice, distribution of education and skills as well as social dividends always put paid to the value system of the society.
Even in the cultural aspect, some known social norms of particular areas are usually misjudged by some group of people.

2.2.3. Moral.

Africa has been noted to be a domain where morals have been the uppermost concern of any institution within it. Every individual is assessed by his/her level of moral attainment. Morals in Nigerian contemporary society have not appreciated at all, young girls are forced into prostitution and early as a result of poverty. Many individuals are denied several rights on daily basis; orphans are treated like slaves by relatives and this has distorted the value system, since it is a known and accepted norm that morals should be held to a high regard.

2.2.4. Political.

This is the landmark of all the forms of distorting the value system, once the political value system is tampered with, the rest of the forms follows. The political structure in Nigeria through election rigging, godfatherism and several other malpractices has succeeded in spurring the country into problems; the value system in any way is not observed at all, producing leaders that are enemy of the public, with these people the political value system is distorted, which includes, disenfranchisement, inequality in the political rights and so on.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISTORTION OF VALUE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA.

When due process is not applied in articulating processes in a society, then that society lacks a well structured value system is not accepted in most
cases, then the society say Nigeria will be in a worrisome situation. Some practices when observed will be attributed at least primarily to the lack of either a bad value system or not accepting the good values. These practices are inexhaustible, but few are highlighted as follows.

- There is abject poverty among people due to dishonesty and insincerity by regional leaders.

- Unemployment is the norm of the society as a result of nepotism, favoritism, tribalism and cheating, as merit is not the yardstick for civil service appointment. Top government officials who are over aged, are reluctant to retire so as to pave way for the new labour force.

- There is high level of illiteracy in many regions as a result of low educational materials. Even when government has given these things, most staffs will hijack these materials to their own advantage.

- The whole country always witness high rate of power outage, as Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) is not up and doing. There is high level of insecurity. The Nigerian police are bags of disappointments; the police sometimes form allies with armed robbers to unleash mayhem on inhabitants. If values are observed these things would not have happened.

- It is unfortunate to note that people no longer participate during voting exercise because they feel that their votes no longer count. Crimes, vandarlis and thuggerly rules electoral periods.

- Child abuse is a prevalent case. This is as a result of inappropriate review of the value system. Female children go into prostitution and are exposed to molestation, most of all a high risk of contacting HIV/AIDS. Crude oil pipelines are vandalized and wastages are recorded as lives are affected due to oil explosion, marine lives are
affected due to crude oil spillage. This is as a result of illiteracy, unemployment, arson, poverty, overpopulation and other factors militating against the value system.

In Nigerian tertiary institutions the neglect of value system by both students and staffs has put many bizarre practices at the fore front, where cases of score upgrading, lack of due process in offer of admission, molestation, and rape of female students, bribery, cultism, drug trafficking and many other corrupt practices worsening the educational sector. Many pundits attribute these misfortunes as a result of distortion of values system.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1. ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA

Elections are methods by which people are chosen to occupy certain offices in an organisation or in a state. Modern democratic elections are supposed to be free and fair for all. However experiences have shown that most elections in Nigeria are neither free nor fair, thereby making the impact of value system null and void. They are marked by violence and malpractices.

Electoral malpractices are acts of violating the rules and regulations for a free and fair election. These malpractices are perpetuated by voter, the candidates, security agents, the government and political parties. Electoral malpractice has put paid to the first and second republic republics and it is not have a good toll on the contemporary government.

3.2. FORMS OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

3.2.1. Rigging of results: results of elections are fraudulently manipulated by electoral officers, law enforcement agents, and the candidate of their agents. The rigging can be in form of inflation of results or alteration of election figures in favour of a candidate or a party. It is sad to note that during the 2007 general elections on 14th April 2007 I was at my hometown Oraifite, Ekwusigo, L.G.A in Anambra state, the house of assembly elections was still on at virtually every polling center, when the result of the same polls was announced at the state capital Awka.

3.2.2. Ballot papers mismanagement: during the 2007 general elections, ballot papers were manipulated at will. Maurice Iwu led INEC is an epitome of disgrace as almost all the election were being nullified by the court.
Politicians and their collaborators dump illegally printed ballot boxes on the day of voting. Even some Nigerian Politicians at different times have illegally or in favour of their own candidates.

3.2.3. Violence and intimidation: party agents and thugs can be hired to destroy electoral materials or harass electoral officers. Even it is now a common practice in recent were electorates are intimidated and spurred to vote for a party by force. This fracas could turn out to be violent as witnessed in ondo state in 1983 during the gubernatorial election

3.2.4. Registration malpractices: the number of registered voters in a constituency can be inflated by politicians in connivance with electoral officers. For example the case in Anambra state in 2003 gubernatorial Election. In Nigeria any citizen who is under eighteen years is not eligible for voting. During registration of voter, under aged persons are registered with connivance of fraudulent politicians. During election period, some dubious politicians move from place to place to buy registered cards at a fee from uninformed and illiterate voters, on the polls day, they get people who pose as owners of these cards and vote them.

3.2.5. Forcible removal of ballot boxes: when voting is nearly completed, some politicians’ especially incumbent office holders in contemporary government would send their thugs to carry away ballot boxes of their opponent by force. These boxes could be destroyed. This is usually done in areas where their opponents have stronghold.
3.2.6. Kidnapped of electoral officers: many electoral officials have suffered unduly in officials are abducted and taken away to unknown destinations in the end they could be tortured, killed or made to sign some prepared documents. This act is widely carried out in areas where a contestant feels their opponents would get more votes than him.

3.2.7. Corruption by electoral officers: when voting is on, some party agents, officials or candidates give electoral officers and law enforcement agents some money; this would make the electoral officers to overlook malpractices which they perpetuate.

3.3. Major Causes of Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria

Investigations have revealed that these malpractices could be caused by administrative ineptitude; economic, social, and legal factors and are hereby discussed.

(a) Inadequate preparation: experience has shown that for instance Nigeria had a general election in 1999; the electoral commission has literally gone to sleep until the year 2003. The commission adopts a fire brigade approach in doing certain things. As a result many things are done badly or left totally undone. In most cases sensitive materials like ballot papers or may not be enough or the officials could arrive the venue late.

(b) The system in operation: there is the adoption of winner takes all. This method is also called the victor owns the spoil or the spoil system. When
people win elections or occupy important offices, they enjoy the benefits of that office, all alone, to the disadvantage of the rest of the public. They use their offices to amass wealth. In the view of this, people struggle through thick and thin to win election so as to have all to themselves.

(c) Desire to remain in office: virtually all office holders in Nigeria are sit-tight politicians. They do not want to leave their office even when they are voted out. They adopt various methods of electoral malpractices or even kill their opponents so as to remain in office.

(d) Bribery and corruption: there is bribery and corruption in Nigeria. Recently, a world body adjudged Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. People have come to believe that everything in this country can be achieved through bribery and corruption. They believe that so long as they have the sky is their limit in terms of achieving their desires. In view of this they use their ill-gotten wealth in politics.

(e) Lack of due process in appointing election officers: the national electoral board member is appointed by the ruling party usually to their own advantage. Every state electoral officer has to be appointed and arraigned by the ruling party to rule the election in their favour, even chairman Prof Maurice Iwu is a tool of election rigging during the 2007 general election.

(f) Desire to win at all cost: most Nigerians see Politics as a do or die affair. They should sell all they have so as to get enough money with which to buy votes and bribe electoral officers and law enforcement agents. Such people could apply any method no matter how crude to win.
4.1. ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES AS A DISTORTION OF VALUE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

It is generally believed that the law gives precise and absolute definition to crime in a society. That is to say that people do not really know what crime is until the law came into existence. In like manner the value system governing a particular society describes and defines the norms of the society. So electoral malpractice is an ill or a political menace in the society and what gives it such definition is the value system because it grossly abrogates the proper propositions of societal norms, systems of believe and principles governing the society.

Consequently, where there is a distortion of value system shaping societal actions and systems of believe, there is bound to be the prevalence of other social, political and economic vices of which electoral malpractice is at the fulcrum especially during decisive period of social contract or election. Due to the gross distortion of the value system in Nigeria, there is replete of cases of malpractices in all the states in Nigeria.

4.2. SOLUTIONS TO ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA.

Having discussed the various forms and causes of electoral malpractices, the following suggestions are made to eradicate them to an extent embrace the value system.

4.2.1. Electoral body: the electoral commission should be fair and just. Ranging from the chairman, members of the commission and the staff and
should be people of impeccable personality. They should be non-partisan and be fair to all people.

4.2.2. Good leadership: The Nigerian leaders and politicians should be committed to the pursuit of the principle of social justice.

4.2.3. Long term planning: The electoral commission should embark on a long-term planning. It should not wait for elections to be near before it starts job.

4.2.4. Political education of citizens: The citizens should be educated politically, social and political consciousness should be made to acquire beliefs, feelings and information which would help them resist sit-tight politicians and their cohorts, so as for the value system to be sustained. That who acts falls below societal expectation hindering the accept

4.2.5. Re-orientation: The psychological factors of the society which includes self-actualization and learning can be controlled through re-orientation. There should be social rebirth. They should also have political morality. People should be made to reflect on implication of their political actions. Those whose acts fall below societal values. Those that engineer the political and social woes in the country should be ostracized from the system.
4.3. SUMMARY

This work is not a perfect insight of the concept of value system, considering the fact that concept is versatile, but it clearly gives whosoever that will go through it to know how it operates, how it is being distorted, and its relationship with electoral malpractices and subsequently desist from any vices that will undermine the values of the society. Chapters one and two treat the concept of value system and the way it is distorted respectively. Chapter three examines the way electoral malpractice thrives in Nigeria as well as the major forms and causes of electoral malpractice. Finally chapter four looks into the relationship between value system and electoral malpractice and then proffer solution to this deplorable act.
REFERENCE


