

## **MONEY POLITICS AND ANALYSIS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Contemporary Nigerian society is characterized with money politics which has taken a worrisome dimension and equally the centre stage of her political activities. This ugly trend has become subject of discussion in recent time in Nigeria and this is largely due to the inability of political parties and their candidates to conduct their political activities in an orderly manner especially during electioneering campaigns. Party manifestoes and integrity of candidates contesting for political offices are no longer convincing enough to guarantee them electoral successes thus, resulting to vote-buying. The readiness of the electorate to sell their votes to the highest bidder is another disturbing issue which has become a threat to our democratic process. This paper therefore, examines the implications of such uncharitable behaviour and practice in Nigeria. The paper recommends among others that to reduce the increasing trend of money politics in Nigeria, governmental and non-governmental organisations need to expand the scope of their responsibilities to carry out elaborate sensitization and voter education of the masses about the importance of their conscience in the voting process in elections. This paper applied qualitative method of data collection through the use of text books and journal publications while Investment theory of politics was adopted as a theoretical framework for analysis in this piece.*

**Keywords:** Election, Money politics, Vote-buying, voting behaviour, Nigeria

### **INTRODUCTION**

Money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour have been topics of interest to many writers and scholars in the history of Nigerian democracy due to the devastating impacts of the phenomenon on the body polity. The Nigerian state has experienced instability resulting from illegal practices emanating from her electoral process. The Nigerian Fourth Republic has been characterised with high degree of political instability due to irregularities in the conduct of her elections and this is evident in the nullification of many election results by the election petition tribunals across the country.

The role of money in politics and vote-buying in Nigerian political system today has paved way for the political bourgeois in the country to dominate and occupy key elective and appointive political positions in the country. These political lords and their lieutenants will then control the power of the state and in turn,

authoritatively decides who gets what, when and how. Money seems to have taken a centre stage in the political process in many countries in Africa and Nigerian particular. It is sad to note that money now plays the increasing critical role of political and electoral process to the extent that the word 'money politics' with a pejorative connotation, has crept into the country's political lexicon. The problem with this situation is that the electoral process is often compromised resulting in elections not being free and fair (Davies, 2006:5, Ovwasa, 2014:2). The only worry however, is the noticeable corrupting influence of money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour and their negative impacts on the country's political prospects.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

For the purpose of this study, Investment theory of party competition which is sometimes called the Investment theory of politics was applied as a theory for analysis in this work. Investment theory of politics is a political theory developed by Ferguson Thomas in 1995. The theory focuses on how business elites, not voters, play the leading part in political systems.

The theory states that, since money driven political systems are expensive and burdensome to ordinary voters, policy is created by competing coalitions of investors, not voters. According to the theory, political parties (and the issues they campaign on) are created entirely for business interests—separated by the interests of numerous factors, such as labor-intensive and capital-intensive, and free market and protectionist businesses.

However, this is different from a corporatist system, in which elite interests come together and bargain to create policy. In the investment theory, political parties act as the political arms of these business groups and therefore don't typically try to reconcile for policy.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

Election: The concept of election is not a new phenomenon in a country like Nigeria anymore. The pre-independence Nigeria witnessed massive elections at both regional and national levels. Election is therefore, seen as a competitive process involving more than two or more persons, seeking to control both political and economic power with legitimate support of the electorate or those with the legitimate powers to elect representatives from among the contending persons. Elections are means of selecting those to represent the people in different public positions within a polity. An election "provides citizens with influence over policy making (Powell Jr. 2000). Elections could be ratificatory in the sense that they aim at giving the sitting government some appearances of popularity and mobilize the people for popular participation in development. But under liberal democracy, election plays wider role such as; instrument of accountability, mobilization of people, promotion of legitimacy, among other functions. Competitive political elections are vital to the survival of liberal vibrant of democracy (Ighodalo, n.d.).

In the western democracies, elections are celebrations of fundamental human rights. These rights are expressed in political and civil rights. In general, political rights include the freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, the right to take part in the government of one's country and the right to vote and be voted for in at elections (Peter and Obi, 2014:3).

Election provides both civil and legal rights. Elections provide opportunity for people to decide when to change their government and how such changes could be freely done. Civil rights include the right to life, property, liberty, security of the person which offers protection from the physical violence against the person. In other words, they are called physical integrity rights. They also include protection from torture or inhuman treatment, arbitrary arrest, detention, exile, slavery and servitude, interference with one's privacy and rights of ownership, restriction of person's freedom of movement and freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion.

In many countries, political and civil rights are justiceable whereas other rights such as economic, social and cultural rights are not. A genuine election is a political competition that takes place in an environment characterised by confidence, transparency, and accountability and that provide voters with an informed choice between distinct political alternative (Peter and Obi, 2014).

The nexus between election and human rights underlie the fundamental dignity of beings in the process of choosing who governs him and the type of liberty or freedom he may enjoy during the regime's reign. Election therefore, represents a modern and universally accepted process in which individuals are openly and methodically chosen to present a body or a community in a large entity or government (Nnadozie, 2007). It has become one of the cardinal characterisations of modern democracy. It is only through electoral process that representative democracy can be practiced. Without adhering to electoral laws and processes, democracy cannot be practiced or institutionalised. It is because of the importance of elections in the democratic process that any problem associated with the electoral process has direct impact on the democratic institutions and any freedom enjoyed in any democratic set up. In whatever context that the process of election is used, it implies that each voter exercises his or her right to chose independently of any other voters. It expresses the divergent views of voters on issues, policies and programmes of political parties and candidates for election. Therefore, election implies an element of choice expressed in voting in selecting either from a number of candidates or a range of programmes (Peter and Obi, 2014:6).

During each election in Nigeria, many reasons emerged. Some were based on objective and identified issues that may have substantive influences on the voters. To this extent, some writers and scholars conceptualized the situation as follows:

*Although elections make provisions for the masses to express themselves about the conduct of public officials who have been in power, they do not guarantee the masses of future events or guarantee them access to decision-making. The Nigeria elections are principally competitions for control of electoral machinery in a particular area, or neutralise the influence of its opponents over the personnel operating the machinery, risk losing elections and expression of their political rights, regardless of actual support it enjoy among the voters or electorates" (Palombo, 1974:27, Joseph, 1991:155 cited in Peter and Obi, 2014:6).*

The above views clearly explained the nature of electoral process in Nigeria. Using the machineries of government to fight the citizens is not new with our elections. Since 1999, the electoral processes have been the victim of manipulations of those that have control of the government machineries. Electoral laws are manipulated in favour of the controlling agents. Results are often falsified, mutilated and candidates who are physically rejected by the electorates or voters at the poll were wrongfully announced as the winners. Therefore, peoples' confidence and readiness to vote freely without the influence of money are hampered and appetite for material influences are developed among the electorates and that is why we are where we are in Nigeria today.

## **MONEY POLITICS AND VOTE-BUYING IN NIGERIA**

Money politics and vote-buying have become strategies by many politicians today in the world and Nigerian politicians in particular. The simple logic behind the adoption of the method is because of their inability to convince the electorate through their manifesto as what they stand for, their mission and vision and most importantly, what the electorate stands to benefit if voted into power.

Money politics can therefore, be defined as the phenomenon in electoral process whereby contenders for elective positions use money or money is used on their behalf by their agents as an inducement to sway their supports which is not based on persuading the electorate to vote according to their wish and conviction but on the use of money that has changed hands (Owasa, 2013:2). Vote-Buying on the other hand connote the exchange of voting right by the voters with money from the candidates in an election. It is a process whereby

voter's conscience and views are manipulated to the advantage of the political parties' candidates in an election through the use of money or other material things to induce and appeal to the electorate directly or indirectly.

According to Fredrick Charles and Andrea's Schedler (2005), candidate 'buy' and citizens/electorate 'sell-vote', as they buy and sell apples, shoes or television sets. The act of Vote-Buying by this view is a contract or perhaps an auction in which voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. Parties and candidates buy votes by offering particularistic materials to voters. Candidates may generally aspire to purchase political support at the ballot box in accordance with the idea of market change. Vote-buying may carry different meaning in different cultural context (Ovwasa, 2013:3).

The idea of money politics and vote-buying is the major factor inhibiting credible elections in contemporary Nigeria. The use of money to buy vote does not even stop at the election time. It is a common practice in Nigeria as it is in many other countries, for numerous private interest groups and political action committee which seek policy goal and legislations to serve their narrow private needs to continue to use all the means at their disposal including money, to solidify or extend their influence on the elected officials.

It is observed that the relative ease with which the elected officials show their gratitude by endorsing the legislative and policy proposals of campaign contributors seems to support the hypothesis that there is correlation between special donations to political parties and candidates and legislative votes. Money has, in fact, been made to become the mother milk of politics, which political gladiators must drink to remain in business (Wright, 1985, Sohner, 1973:190 cited in Ovwasa, 2013).

The most unfortunate aspect of money politics and vote-buying in Nigeria is that, the majority of people with adequate knowledge of suffering and needs of the masses are always denied of the opportunities to participate and contest in elections because of the dominant nature of money and material influences in the process. To justify these assertions, Saliu and Lipade (2008) noted that;

*A great chunk of population is excluded from the mainstream of political process due to institutionalised social and economic constraints. For instance, the emphasis on certified education and acquisition of properties obviously put the elite in more vantage position to dominate the vast majority.*

The phenomenon of money politics and vote-buying only became prominent in post independence Nigeria even then; their influence was very minimal in the first republic between the years 1960-1966. During the first republic, appeals to ethnic and religious sentiments were the most important weapons our political leaders and tribal heroes deployed to ensure electoral victories. This was possible because the strength and popularity of the major political parties and their allies were essentially enhanced by the primordial ties they had with the people in their regions. The parliamentary system that was in practiced then, also made it possible for the political parties to exercise considerable controls over the candidates to be fielded for elections Dudley (1982:68) asserted that;

*Candidates in elections were less important as the parties took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity played alliance politics and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raised (Quoted in Ovwasa, Ibid)*

As noted further by Ovwasa, although politicians were known to distribute T-Shirt, Caps and badges with party emblems, some food stuff and sundry items, to voters at political rallies, there was no huge funding by individual candidates to win elections as obtain currently in the political activities of the candidates. Money politics and vote-buying escalated during the second republic in 1979. Some wealthy Nigerians who made money during Nigeria civil war between 1967-1970, by probably supplying arms and ammunitions to both parties to the war and those who were government contractors, reconstructing projects after the destructive civil war. Davies (2006) summarised the situation as follows;

*There was so much display of affluence and use of money by the wealthy contractors and the mercantile class that those who emerged victorious in the conventions and the*

*primaries of some of the political parties, notably, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People's Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) belonged to the business-managerial group.*

The situation was even worse in 1993 as the act of money politics and vote-buying took very firm root in the political activities of contestants. This was because the political campaign for the conduct of 1993 elections demonstrated excessive use of money during the party primaries and presidential elections. At the primaries for example, the use of money to win party nomination was pervasive while complain of bribery trailed the results. A candidate who lost out claimed that money was paid to party functionaries, who were demanding and negotiating the amount of money to be given to them for payment to win offices and others and how votes will be allocated to aspirants (Nwosu, 1996).

In the same vein, money politics and vote-buying reached their pinnacles in the elections that ushered in the current democratically elected government in 1999 and civilian-civilian transition elections of 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. A political scientist observed that, "if the use of money in 1999 was open and shameless, that of 2003 was outrageously indecent" (Suberu, 2007). Obasanjo belatedly admitted that;

*With so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between money politics and the potential for high level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investments in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections. Can we now move from politics of money materialism to politics of idea, issues and development (Quoted in Ovwasa, 2013:8)*

It suffices to note that, the current probe into the office of the immediate past National Security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki in 2015 by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is a good example of how our politicians spend huge amount of money on election issues. Raymond Dokpesi, the founder of DAAR Communications Plc and Ray Power FM who was implicated in the crime admitted that the sum of N2.1b was collected by him from the office of NSA for the purpose of publicity/advertisements his organisations did for People Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2015 presidential election.

The situation of money politics and vote-buying is not limited to electorates alone; it has permeated every facets of electoral process and equally destroyed our judicial institution. The situation in Ogun state Osun state between Olagunsoye Oyinlola and Engineer Rauf Aregbesola in 2008-2010 remains one of the best examples of how money politics and vote-buying syndrome destroys our democratic society.

In a country where money politics is very high, the opposition candidates are in disadvantage position before the polls. The fact that the politician is out of power, having lost patronage easily loses followership makes matter worst. And because most politicians today cannot look beyond their nose, they soon become orphans (Cited in Ovwasa, 2013:9). It is now obvious from the analysis so far that, money politics and vote-buying in Nigeria has negative impact on our democratic development and the entire polity. The general processes is characterised by this reckless, blatant and shameless use of money to buy vote and even conscience. In no different ways, politicians are ready to channel their financial and material resources to secure electoral victory at the polls or election tribunals.

## **VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

The term voting behaviour tries to seek explain into the factors responsible for individual's actions or behaviour in elections and why do people behave the way they do politically. It is different from money politics and vote-buying even though they posses similar characters and characteristics. In Voting Behaviour, combination of attitudinal, social and psychological factor are related to individual voting behaviour. Attitudinal factor such as assessment of the personal characters and characteristics of the candidates,

evaluation of government performance, orientations of specific policy issues, party identifications and ideology are some of the determinant factors in making choice of candidates and their various political parties. For social factor, race, religion, region and social class are all factors contributing to voting behaviour. Psychological factors are based on emotion. The considerations which may influence the choice of a candidate were also identified by Durotoye (2015) as follows;

- ✓ Orientations on specific issues of public policy
- ✓ General evaluation of the government performance
- ✓ Evaluation of the general characteristics of the candidates
- ✓ Party identifications
- ✓ General ideological orientations
- ✓ Psychological factors

It is pertinent to note that, in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, most of these factors contributed tangibly to the end of PDP long-term rule in the history of Nigerian political system. Factor like general evaluation of the government performance influences most peoples' decision during the presidential election. Durotoye posits that electoral changes can be divided into two types; short-term and long-term.

Evaluation of candidate qualities and general government performance are short-term forces capable of substantial shift from one election to the next. Party identification and ideology are much more stable in the short-term. Nigerian political parties are fluid in with their ideological orientations. In most cases in Nigeria, people join political parties mainly on sentimental grounds based on their affinity with party stalwarts or based on their assessment with political fortune in a particular party. Issues orientations are not so intense.

The use of emotional appeal in the political campaign to increase support for candidates or decrease support for a challenger is a widely recognized practice and a common element of any campaign strategy, Campaign often seek to instil positive emotions such as enthusiasm and hopefulness about their candidate to improve turnout and political activism while seeking to raise fear and anxiety about the challenger (Brader, 2006, Marcus, 2006 cited in Durotoye, 2014:2).

In the build up to 2015 general elections especially presidential election, the centre stage of political campaign was the emotional and sentimental appeal. Social class, race, religion and region were all applied as means for seeking support for their party's candidate. The All Progressives Congress, (APC) threatened to sue the then first Lady, Mrs Patience Jonathan to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over her comments against the party's presidential candidate General Muhammadu Buhari. The comments were made in Edo and Kogi, Imo and other states during her visits and rallies to garner support for the re-election for her husband, she abused President Buhari as a dead brain man, a Islamic extremist and urged all PDP supporters to stone whoever that dare shout APC's slogan "change".

#### **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR MONEY POLITICS, VOTE-BUYING AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

So many reasons can be adduced as being responsible for the persistent and increasing level of money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour in Nigeria. Some of these factors include ignorance on the parts of the electorates, apathy, poverty, inadequate information or lack of awareness and inadequate sensitization, willingness on the part of the voters and deceit by the politicians. There is also attitudinal problem on the side of the people involved in both buying and selling. Our attitude toward politics is not good because most politicians view it as a call to investment from which huge benefits is expected and not a call to serve humanity. Electorate on their parts sees politics especially during elections as an opportunity to sell their vote to represent their own share of national cake since they do not have access to where the national cake is being shared (Ovwasa, 2013).

Other factors are identified by Davies (2006) as follows:

- a. The inability of many political parties and contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes for scrutiny by voters, instead of clear-cut manifestoes that could enable electorate to make a rational political choice, meaningless slogans, demagogic and rabble-rousing speeches are made. Such speeches either over-estimate or underestimate the political perception of the voters, but are rarely educative and convincing. Many voters seem to be unimpressed by all the tricks the parties and the candidates employ, hence the need to bribe them for their votes.
- b. Political cynicism on the part of the voters who believe that political office holders are incurably corrupt, self-seeking and incompetent, that politics is a dirty and dishonourable enterprise, that the whole political process is a fraud and betrayal of public trust. This cynical view of politics is further accentuated by unfulfilled promises made by the winners of past elections. Thus, asking for pay-off, another way by which people receive their own share of national cake. On the other hand, the candidate who gave money to voters probably believes that they are investing against electoral future.
- c. Focusing on personalities rather than on issues. By the mode of their campaigns, most candidates draw the attention of the electorate away from the political parties to themselves. The consequence of this is that, the political parties and their messages become less important to the electorate. The candidates then take the centre stage and therefore, need to spend more money than their party could afford in order to mobilize support for themselves.
- d. The peoples' perception greatly reinforced by obscene display of opulence by public office holders and ostentatious living of many politicians that every elected or appointed public officer is amassing wealth from the public treasury. This seems to have strengthened by the resolve of many voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder.
- e. The penchant of politicians to strive to win elections, even at the primary level at all cost, makes desperate contestants to engage in all sorts of malpractices including offering of financial and material inducement to voters. Working on the poverty of the people, Nigerian politicians have been known to distribute food stuffs and other consumable material to voters shortly before the elections and sometimes, on the election days, contrary to the provision of the extant electoral law that prohibits such practice. Instances abound too, where candidate threw some money into the air during campaign rallies, making people to scramble for it and getting injured in the process.
- f. The noticeable weakness in a party whip, characteristics of party politics in presidential system, when elected members exercise considerable degree of freedom when voting on legislative proposals. Such freedom makes legislators to be more susceptible to receive gratifications from the private interest groups. The interest groups employ what shank calls legalized bribery. They make large donations to some spurious private gift to the legislators or sponsor their overseas travel, etc, all in the name of public relations to secure votes of the legislators in the legislature.
- g. The absence of any legislation that put any ceiling on financial contributions to political parties and candidates by group of individual (Davies, 2006).

The above reasons are greatly responsible for the increasing levels of money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour of politicians and electorate in Nigerian democratic dispensation therefore, hampered other essential aspects of elections and development in all ramifications. For instance, the resolve by the electorate to sell their votes to the highest bidder put their own lives and development of all kinds in serious jeopardy because that act of vote selling will continue to grant those who have accumulated their money primitively to continue to thrive over the credible ones with financial constraints.

## **CHALLENGES OF MONEY POLITICS, VOTE-BUYING AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

It is not an exaggeration to say that challenges posed by this type of situation are numerous. One of such obvious challenges is the fact that when you put a square peg in a round hole, definitely, there will be incompatible mixture. The act of vote buying has sent a wrong signal in the value and nature of our leaders.

Effective governance is based on the tenets and practice of democracy. A government that enjoys the support and trust of the people must be a legitimate one. Legitimacy engenders trust and support of the people to government policies and reform agenda. Unfortunately, money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour of the electorate and that of politicians erode this very important attribute of democratic government. The truth is that, without legitimacy there is no trust, and without trust, there can be no genuine political support. On the 2007 elections and its legitimacy status, Asobi (2007) has this to say; the set of elections conducted in April 2007 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which purportedly produced legislators at both the state and national levels, Governors/Deputy Governors and President and his Vice respectively, has created problem of political legitimacy. That problem is yet to be resolved. It is also unlikely that the ruling in Nigeria will be minded to find a lasting solution to it. It is the Nigerian people in their non-governmental capacities that seem to have solution to this political underdevelopment.

**Militarisation of elections:** By the militarisation of electoral process, voters are apprehensive and in most cases are forced to collect money and duly comply with voting under duress. It also affects their conscience which eventually leads to vote selling to avoid missing out rightly.

Just as in the Ekiti state governorship election, there were heavy presence of security agencies about two weeks before the election, a move which according to President Goodluck Jonathan was necessary for safety of life and property before, during and after the election. While the leadership of APC alleged that the presence of military personnel was to manipulate the polls in favour of PDP candidate. The same thing repeated itself in Osun state. The APC candidate, Rauf Aregbesola told the party members to fortify themselves spiritually by Psalms and Bible verse for the Christians, Quran and Quranic verses for the Muslim while traditionalists should feel free and be ready to defend their votes with the use of amulets and other charms should the vote turn violent. There were reports that soldiers and officials of the Department of State Security (DSS) randomly chased down and arrested APC leaders and members across the state (Durotoye, 2014).

**Stomach infrastructure:** Stomach infrastructure entered into political lexicon of Nigeria after the June 2014 Ekiti state governorship election. This term is used to describe the electorates' preference to immediate gains like food and money as opposed to the long-term development. Again, spending money beyond what is originally required to defray legitimate campaign expenses by directly or indirectly bringing voters is definitely an electoral malpractice.

People integrity and those who genuinely want to serve the people but have no money to buy votes may lost out in the electoral contest, while bad candidates with abundant financial resources or those with corrupt tendencies may get elected. When this happens, the immoral and condemnable use of money to buy votes is then celebrated to high heavens, as a good and effective weapon, in electoral battles by successful contestants (Milbrath, 1965).

Money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour has also made election results to have little or nothing to do with performance in office of the politicians. Performance is no longer considered as the critical factor in electoral outcome; hence, the incentive to perform is weak. While vote-buying is very effective in achieving electoral victory, the resort to it is very high.

Pertinent to note is that, this kind of practice constituted serious impediments and blemish on public policy and other important segment which consequently brings the highest indignity to the electoral and democratic process.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has been able to examine critically the concepts of money politics, vote-buying and voting behaviour among the electorate and the candidates and their negative challenges it reposed on the electoral and democratic processes. It is revealed that effective governance, virile democratic institutions and citizenship rights are achievable only when undue interferences are avoided.

The paper also revealed that any polity where voters are not completely or as much as possible insulated from outside pressure most especially, they cannot choose freely. It notes that if power and money influence take the centre stage of determining the elector choices, the very essence of constitutional rights of the citizens to freely exercise their freedom of choice and equality in the democratic society may be called to question while such good governance and development will remain a mirage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To reduce the increasing trend of money politics, vote-buying and negative voting behaviour on the part of the electorate, governmental and non-governmental organisations needs to expand the scope of their responsibilities to carry out elaborate sensitization and voter education of the masses about the importance of their conscience in the voting process in elections. The use of food stuffs and emotional appeals on the personal attack at the campaign rallies by our modern politicians without workable legal prohibitions has greatly affected the psychological stability of the voters. Adequate and definite means of preventing such malaise should be put in place by relevant authorities that help to check-mate the excess of politicians in the way and manner they abuse peoples' rights.

Importantly, politicians and stakeholders in the Nigerian project need attitudinal change because official and legal sanction alone does not prevent the trend. Considered Ovi-Whisky cited in Alabi, (2008) said; "If the individuals can have self-examination and determine to be honest at elections, come what may, there will be free and fair elections. What we need is a deep sense of patriotism and a devoted sense of selfless to the acquisition of wealth by unjust means and refuse to be brought at election time or to commit any electoral offence or other kind of evil during elections and if we refuse to make ourselves marketable commodities, the elections will be free and fair. Further, if we behave like decent persons and law abiding in the absence of the uniformed police officers or soldiers, the election will be free and fair".

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