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EFFECTS OF YOUTHS' POLITICAL APATHY ON DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN NIGERIA: KATSINA STATE IN FOCUS

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Abstract
This study examines Youths' Political Apathy on Democratization Process in Nigeria: Katsina State in Focus. Using *mixed method research design* and descriptive analysis, it has been realized that *Political parties and politicians play one of the fundamental contributory roles towards youth voter apathy in Katsina state. Furthermore, the findings showed that the existing political parties in the country lack well-articulated polices, programmes because they are devoid of any ideological conviction, as such a great chunk of Nigerians perceives many of these parties as the same. It is against this background that a good number of this study's respondents failed to perform their civic duties. Thus, it was recommended, among others, that a robust programme of an informal civic education be implemented so as to reduce the high level of political apathy among residents in Katsina State.*
Keywords: Political Apathy, Political Party, Political Class, Reforms**.**

1.1 Introduction

Nigerian political parties potentially play important role in electoral positions in the country's current political process. However, the experience in Nigeria has shown that a majority of the citizens prefer not to be involved in the political activities before, during and after elections. This scenario is what social scientists refer to as political apathy, where a vast majority of people demonstrate a lack of interest in the political sphere of the country. Suffice to state here that, in Nigeria, political apathy is so deeply rooted and pervasive in the consciousness of people to the extent that many have already programmed their minds that actively participating in any political activity will not produce any political relevance. In fact, it is this deep-rooted apathy that gave rise to a passive and parochial political culture. This is aptly captured by DeLuca (1995) when he argued that political apathy on the part of citizens can equally manifest in an indefinite suspension of the consciousness to form political intentions and act accordingly.

Consequently, several factors have been identified to be responsible for the high level of political apathy among citizens. For instance, DeLuca (1995) blamed the educational institutions, political parties and voluntary (civil societies) organizations for not doing enough to encourage popular participation. Specifically, DeLuca (1995) averred that rather than preparing learners for citizenship and active participation in the governance process, educational institutions are fast becoming busy centers for job preparation. Van Deth and Ellf (2000) opined that socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (in terms of age, gender and education) still account for manifestations and differences in political involvement and political apathy among the eligible voting population, especially in Europe.

Here in Nigeria, majority of Nigerians currently disapprove of how elections are conducted and tend to stay indoors during voting periods. The existence of political apathy in Nigeria is no longer debatable, according to Jega (2023), because voter turnout in the recently concluded (2023) general elections provided scientific and empirical evidence of voter apathy and disinterestedness among sections of the electorate in elections. An election in which a significant number of people fail to vote will not accurately represent the people's wishes. Democracy is jeopardized by a lack of enthusiasm for political participation. According to Emerson (2016), one such danger is that a minority will install a government that does not prioritize the interests of the majority. According to Griguoli (2018), a vibrant democracy depends on a well-informed electorate turning out in large numbers, and many citizens do not take voting seriously, do not understand the consequences of not voting, are uninformed, and vote emotionally rather than logically.

Nigeria's political apathy stems from a combination of ignorance and deliberate deception by some politicians. As a result, the masses are unable to see a link between their state of underdevelopment and their lack of participation in the electoral process (Fagunwa, 2015). Falade came to the conclusion that the Nigerian political culture does not allow for the establishment and maintenance of true democracy.

In this regard, (Ibekwe, 2016) lamented that many people have lost trust and confidence in the government and their elected representatives, since those elected to represent the people have always failed to deliver on the promises made to the electorate during campaigns. In her view, after they are elected and sworn into office, they turn demigods. This makes people lose confidence in them and as such manifests in political apathy recorded in almost every election conducted in Nigeria. This corroborated earlier position that politicians make series of promises during election campaigns; hence most of these promises are far from being fulfilled after they are voted into power. As a result of this, most voters lose interest in any political activities. Political apathy experienced before, during and after the election could be expatiated on the basis of lack of trust/confidence in the government, fear of intimidation by hired thugs/security agents, campaign crises, bad governance, election fraud/violence, poor political education, poverty and dearth of infrastructural development in the state, among others. These factors no doubt seem to have contributed to political apathy during the election and as such made caricature of our nascent democracy.

Low turnout during elections has become an abysmal situation that calls for urgent action in Nigeria. Some political experts interviewed by Adedigba however suggested good governance as a way to gain peoples' trust and ensure their participation in Nigeria. Daily Excelsior (2019) stressed that there are democracies where voting is compulsory and regulated by national constitutions and electoral laws; sanctions, penalties, or punishment are provided for non-voting as a civic offence. In filling part of this research gap, this study seek to examine political apathy in Katsina state, Nigeria. The scope of this study is centred on effects of political apathy on youth and democratization process in Nigeria with focus on political apathy in Katsina local government from the period between 2019 and 2023. It covers the period of sustained act of political apathy, which called for urgent response of stakeholders. The study is timely, because the fear that electorates' votes will not count, political violence that is usually associated with elections in Nigeria, biased electoral umpires, bad governance and several other reasons have been identified to contribute to the deep-rooted political apathy among Nigerians. Practically, this study will be of paramount importance to the elections management in Nigeria, especially, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), registered political parties, non-governmental organizations, the national and state governments as well as the general public: The study will also contribute to the existing body of knowledge and encourage other researchers to carryout similar work in the field.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The apparent increase in the level of people refusing to participate in the democratic process in Nigeria, is affecting the democratic politics as well as the democratic institution of the country. This condition is attributing to the fact that corruption has engulfed the process. A situation where the votes of the electorates no longer counts due to the dishonesty of politicians who hijack the process has led to the apparent disinterest of a large segment of the population in the political process of voting and participating in politics. Structures where the political party determines the outcome of the leaders rather than the votes of the masses constitute an embarrassing situation where the people's right are denied. The system does not give motivation to people to people to express their will while many are marginalized due to their status in the society. This situation leads to poor turnout of voters, during voter registration and general election. In view of this, the study is aimed at examine the consequences of the act of political apathy on the ongoing process of democratization in Nigeria. The major objective of this study is to provide answer to the above questions with a view to contribution to minimizing or eradicating the act of political apathy in Katsina Local Government.

Literature Review

2.2 Perspectives on Political Apathy

The concept of political apathy could be viewed in different ways as espoused by scholars. As political apathy is the deficiency of love and devotion to a state. It is the indifference on the part of citizens of any state as regards their attitudes towards political activities such as elections, public opinions, and civic responsibilities. It has to do when any citizen is indifferent with regard to their attitude towards political activities and is measured by the amount of the citizens' political involvement, knowledge or activity. Fagunwa (2015).

In the same vein, political apathy means the degree to which citizens shows no interest in the political activities of their country. While some citizens are actively engaged in political activities, others without such political interest see politics as a non-issue that is not worthy of expending their energies, time and resources. These people who show no interest in political activities are said to be *apolitical* or are called *political passivists* or *apathetic*. In other words, political apathy is the absence of interest in, or concern about, socio-political life. Thus, an apathetic person lacks interest in the social and political affairs of his/her country. Ibrahim, Liman, & Mato (2015). Political apathy, if left uncontrolled, can bring about stagnation to the development of any nation. An individual's political apathy begins with a lack of understanding of politics or government to a certain degree and that makes it more difficult for that individual to see the value in universal suffrage, and to see the benefits and/or costs of new government policies. Idike (2014).

Voter apathy, a subset of political apathy, has thus emerged as a major problem in mature and emerging democracies, settled and volatile societies, large and thriving economies, as well as small and troubled ones, among youth, men/women and other marginalized groups as much as among mainstream dominant interests. It actually happens purposely which may be due to certain factors or things in which such voters need to see changed, solved or provided. Voter apathy could be measured by the percentage of registered voters and the voters' turnout during the elections. The absence of affection and fidelity to a state characterizes political apathy. It is the lack of concern among people of any state for their stances on political matters, such as elections, the general public, and civic duties (Yakubu, 2012). Political apathy is then viewed as the totality of all forms withdrawal, unwillingness to be part of socio-political activities of the country with believe that it won't add value or make a difference in the observed state of the society. Many people in our society easily conceive political apathy to mean voting apathy or lack of interest in voting. Voting apathy is only a fraction of the lump sum of what political apathy entails. Political apathy extends more than just lack of interest in voting but all that concerns politics of the state; it comprises of, association apathy, listening apathy, reading or obtaining information apathy, contributory apathy / supportive apathy. Citizens with political apathy always nurse the feeling that there is no benefit in being committed to political activities of the country. Political apathy is sparked in people by some factors such as; failed promises of politicians, ignorance/illiteracy, bad governance, wide gap between the government and the governed, historical experiences, fear of violence and incidences of violence, global exposure of what is obtainable in other countries, discontent of government impact on lives, lack of trust, high levelled corruption on the side of electoral officials, and whole lots of others. Political apathy becomes more dangerous when citizens that are supposed to be patriotic and contribute in capacity measures towards the country's development withdraw and turn recalcitrant to the entire political system. Nuka, Kia & Nwibor (2015).

The twin issues of illiteracy and purposeful deception by some politicians in Nigeria are the root of the country's political apathy. As a result, the general public is unable to draw a connection between their underdevelopment and their lack of engagement in the electoral process. One of the causes of electoral fraud and political manipulation by desperate politicians is this political indifference. For instance, it was stated that politicians purchased voter identification cards at a cost of 10,000 naira (#10,000.00) each in order to prepare for electoral fraud during the general election in April 2011. In other regions of the nation, including Kwara, Kano, Rivers, Katsina, Adamawa, and Bayelsa states, some of the victims of this questionable act were starving and politically indifferent citizens. It is clear

threat to democracy once citizens refuse or decide to dissociate from political activities in their own state or country. The attitude will end up bringing in mediocre as leader of the people.

It is expected of every Nigerian citizen to be patriotic; contribute their own quota towards the development of the state and at the same time expect to gain the dividends of democracy as they experience inclusion despite diversity in the country. Once these expectations are cut short, the feelings of discontent are visited with political apathy. Lack of interest in political activities can also be possible where citizens are well satisfied or not well satisfied by the government. Their comfort can inform their lack of bother to take part in political activities. In this condition, they may have the opinion that there is no need to worry about politics since everything is in order. Nigerian citizens are not alone in this behaviour of political apathy. It has become a global issue but people have different factors (negative or positive) that may necessitate the form of apathy obtainable in their own society. Fagunwa (2015).

2.3 Review of Discourses on Democratization

Democratization is undoubtedly one of the most commonly used concepts in modern states. The different perspectives on the concept are influenced by history, ideology, discipline, and experience. Underscores its cultural imperative. They perceives democracy as a cultural expression which permeates a given society by manifesting in the conduct of the citizens. He therefore opines that the dividends of democracy are not to be found in roads, bridges, airports and other physical infrastructure alone but in 'more intangible inculcation of a culture of freedom and civil governance'. This implies a correlation between democratization and the peoples' ownership of governance process. In the process, what Efemini (2003) calls 'a democratic state' comes into existence. A democratic state is one in which the people are actually in power; it vests ultimate power on the people with which their consent confer legitimacy on government, as well as government programmes and policies. It is in this context that Idike (2014) defines democracy as 'a system where the government is dependent on the governed, both for becoming the government and for continuing legitimacy of governance'. Thus, Akinyemi viewed democracy as 'the prescription for a desirable nexus between government and the governed'. The central concept or buzzword, as it were, in a democratic state, is popular power. The key instrument of the 'investiture' of popular power on the people is regular election, which should basically, be about choices among competing perspectives and policies. The crisis of democratization in most countries, especially Africa, today is not only that of repudiation of popular power, but as Claude Ake and Gilbert, & Barigbon (2015) noted, 'the consent of the governed is now taken rather than given'. Analysis of the foregoing is suggestive of democratization as a process involving the institutionalization of democracy. By logical extension, Centre for Public Policy Alternatives (2015) writes that democratization is simply thus; the extension of the democratic space to accommodate more active involvement of the ruled in the dealings of the society. It is a process of empowerment of the citizens to be able to ensure good governance by influencing the course of political decision-making and over all statecraft, the absence of which make democracy a mockery.

Idike, (2014) and Gilbert, & Barigbon (2015) submits that democratization is an avenue for political liberalization of decision making, and that it promotes the active participation of the citizenry in the use of state power. Faguwa (2015) identified conditions most crucial for democratization. They include, infusing of spirit of liberty, justice, equality and order among the people. He also notes that for democratization to have firm roots, the society, economy, politics, the constitution, the electoral system and the political parties must be organized and operated on the basis of democratic values, norms and culture. We can deduce from the foregoing definitions that democratization denotes popular ownership and control of democratic governance, citizens' participation in the form of political access and political mobilization, granting of basic freedoms and political rights, the establishment of popular and competitive elections, and the existence of a democratic state are the most important features that entrench the values and practices that are conducive to democratization

2.4 Youth and Political Apathy

Political apathy can be seen as the indifference of citizens towards election and political activities. It also includes campaign, sensitization and public meetings on political activities. Apathy is mostly

seen among the younger generation, most especially youths who have turned themselves to cyber bullies on election days instead of making their votes count. They sit in the comfort zones of their house to cast their votes on the internet but those that actually want representative leadership and good governance go to the polling booth to cast their votes. Ashiru (2010).

Though, there could be an excuse not to blame the youth for their non-challant attitude towards voting as some of them have great cynicism about our government and leaders. The youths no longer believe in our government as they think the government only pay lip service to campaign promises. They at times get affected psychologically by the failed promises of our leaders. Also, the sit tight syndrome is affecting the youths as most of our politicians have refused to leave power willingly and this discourages others from going into politics because they feel they don't have a chance. The general believe now is that politics is only meant for some set of elites in the society and they will continue to rule not minding the efforts of the others. Obi (2020).

The foregoing have capture the place of youth and their role in contemporary Nigerian polity. The study further concludes that the role of youth in political participation and development cannot be over emphasized as they should be involved in the processes that shape their future, sustain political and developmental process in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. The movement toward participatory democracy the world over has necessitated the urgent need for greater involvement of the civil society in the governance process. Since the youth constitute a significant proportion of the population, their contribution in this process is vital to democratic consolidation. Udalla (2011).

However, Nigeria with over 140 million people and with over fifty percent of youths cannot afford to lock out the youths if they must compete politically, technologically and scientifically in order to align itself with the sustainable development in African in particular and the developed world in general. The closing years of the 20th century and the early years of this century could have been described as the "influx of youths in active participation in politics. Prospect for this participatory democracy has received a boost by the gradual opening up of the democratic space. An indication of this opening was the active participation of the younger elements of the civil society in the transition to civil rule that culminated into the general elections of 1999. Similar experience was replicated in 2003. Some of the Governors who won election were in their late 30s. The National and State Houses of Assembly also parade some members of the youthful population. At the local government level, youth, most of whom were school teachers and young graduates also became Councilors and Chairmen of their Local Councils (Angulu, 1999).

However, there are considerable obstacles and challenges facing Nigerian youths. Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, drug abuse and the scourge of human trafficking, armed robbery and kidnapping et-cetera are steady impediments that must be tackled if the youths are to be adequately empowered to take on their role in the political and sustainable development process. For the Nigerian youths to be politically and developmentally relevant, it is imperative that they must Demonstrate adequate participation in politics; Promote political issues; Engage in political campaign; Hold public and political offices; given financial and material assistance to political parties with sound manifestos; and Protest political inefficiency, or inefficiency in governance through appropriate petitions, usually diverted to the law-making organs at all levels of governance. It is hoped that if policy pronouncement is matched with action, the youth will form the fulcrum of a transparent, purposeful and service-oriented leadership with sustainable development in the 21s century.

1.2 Historizing Political Apathy in Nigeria

Political apathy has been a longstanding issue, particularly among youth. The country has experienced a number of political transition, from military rule to civilian rule, and has seen a number of changes in government. However, many Nigerians, particularly youth, have felt that these changes have not made a significant difference in their lives. They feel that the government is not responsive to their needs, or that they do not have a voice in the political process. This can result in a sense of political apathy, and a belief that there is no point in engaging in politics. Idike (2014). They are a number of reasons why political apathy particularly prevalent among youth in Nigeria.

Many young people feel that they have not had a say in the political process, and that the country's political institution are not pen to them. This is because the age requirement for holding political office in Nigeria is quite high, at 35 years of age, and the voting age is also high at 18 years of age. This means that many young people are effectively barred from engaging in politics, which can lead to fillings of alienation and disengagement. Agaigbe (2015).

Youth in Nigeria may feel disconnected from the country's political system because they do not see it as relevant to their lives. Many youth face significant challenge, including high unemployment rates, lack of access to the education and healthcare, and violence. They may feel that the political system does not address these issues, or that it is not capable of making meaningful change. This can lead to a sense of despair and apathy, and a feeling that there is no point in engaging in politics. Agu, Okeke & Idike (2013).

Many youth in Nigeria may feel disillusioned with the country's political leaders. There have been a number of high-profile cases of corruption and mismanagement in the country, and many young people may feel that their leaders are not working in their best interest. This can lead to a lack of trust in the political system and a feeling of cynicism and apathy. Finally, many young people may simply feel that they do not have time or resources to engage in politics. Many youth in Nigeria are struggling to make ends meet, and may feel that they do not have the time or energy to participate in political activities. Fagunwa (2015).

All of these factors can contribute to political apathy among youth in Nigeria. This has important implications for the country's political system, as a lack of engagement from youth can lead to low voter turnout, reduce participation in life, and reduce trust in the government. However, it is important to note that not all youth feel this way. There are number of youth who are actively engaged in politics and who are working to make a difference in their communities. These individuals are an important part of the country's political landscape, and their voices should not be discounted.

Political apathy is an unrecognized threat until recently plaguing most countries in the world. Although analysts believe that this is not true such that countries that are being affected recognize it but tend to shy away basically because the issue is not as contentious as that of national security, environmental degradation, economy, and poverty, among others. Political apathy has been with Nigeria since the introduction of electoral politics in 1922 but got worse when Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, and until today, it has escalated unfortunately serious attention has not been paid to it by the Nigerian government. In all the elections conducted in Nigeria since 1999 till date, political apathy has manifested itself in a number of forms which includes the decline to register as a voter, the refusal to vote, failure to protest against rigging or ballot snatching, and failure to assist the security agents with useful information. All these have impacted negatively on the Nigeria's electoral process. Overall, the issues of political apathy among youth in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted. It is the result of a variety of social, economic, and political factors, and cannot be attributed to any one cause. However it is important to address the issue of political apathy in order to ensure that all citizens, regardless of age, have a voice in the political process and feel that they can make a difference. This may require a variety of strategies, such as engaging youth in civic life, increasing access to education and resources, and addressing corruption and mismanagement in the government. Ibrahim, Liman, & Mato (2015).

2.5 The Challenges of Youth Political Participation in Nigeria.

The youths in Nigeria have some impediments/challenges working against their efforts to entrench and sustain genuine democracy in the state and Nigeria at large. These among others, are.

2.5.1 Unemployment and Poverty

In spite of having a National Youth Policy that lays out a very bold vision for harnessing the potentials of youths, and signposts how strategy could be built for empowering the demography to make far-reaching contributions to national development, yet no concrete role has been designed for youths to attain political power. A number of the key factors hindering the political participation of youths have included poverty, resulting from the failure of the state to attend to the welfare of the people, which is the primary purpose of government. As such, the lack of adequate social

provisioning for education, health and decent housing has put the youth at the disadvantage of being fundamentally distracted by existential issues (Kura, 2019; Nyong, 2017; Falade, 2014).

However, when programmes and schemes are put together to tackle poverty, the persistence of corruption detracts these programmes from working optimally in achieving their desired objectives. Linked to poverty is the unfortunate situation of youth unemployment, seeing many youth lacking access to the opportunities to providing meaningfully for themselves, and those who depend on them. (Idike, 2014; Fagbehun, 2013). As much as many youths are not trained enough to have skills that make them employable, others are yet routinely offloaded from tertiary institutions into non-existent labour markets, which were destroyed by the poor economic policies of government. This has served as basis for many in the political elite to consider youths as only being suitable for roles as political enforcers, purveyors of violence and other nefarious purposes.

Unemployment indicates the situation where an individual or group of individuals is/are unable to be gainfully employed as a means of daily survival. It is a state of joblessness where some societal members lack sources of income which is necessary for their social, economic and political integration into the society. Gilbert, & Barigbon (2015). Lack of employment, which in most cases is attributed to lack of education, normally breeds poverty amongst the youths. Avers that, "the number of youths who are out of work and out of school either as graduates or drop-out ----- are increasingly worrisome." Perhaps, there is link between unemployment and poverty and the roles youths are playing in the democratization process in Nigeria. This means that joblessness and poverty pose a serious threat to the survival of the youths and their ability to play their expected roles in sustaining the nascent democracy in the state. Invariably, this has compelled them to engage in any dirty and unhealthy kind of work, the common of which is political gangster.

Moreover, the commercialization of politics, which is now regarded as a business with anticipated returns and no longer primarily about public service, has put the political selection process at the discretion of merchants of power, the godfathers, who wield near absolute control over political party machineries and processes. This has been an enduring form of restriction, requiring aspirants to toe the line of approval of these godfathers, as the main route to endorsement and political participation. There are also the eligibility restrictions preventing youths from participation in the country's political processes. In Nigeria, this had basically been viewed by a section of the youths in the form of the limitations for seeking political office on the basis of the age criterion. Before the amendment of the Nigerian constitution in 2018, the age requirement for those vying for the office of the President was 40 years; that of governor was 40 years; senator, 40 years; membership of the federal House of Representatives, 30 years; and the state Houses of Assembly, 30 years.

2.5.3 Lack of Formidable and Genuine Youth Organization and Leadership

Most youths do not form a vibrant youth organization that can pursue youth development policies and support the bid to substantive and sustainable democracy in Nigeria, to be specific. Where there are so called youth organizations, they are spear headed by elders in the disguise of youth. Thus, this can be proven by the fact that most of the heads of youth organizations are persons aged above 40 or sometimes even 60 plus (Raman, 2007). This situation has been affecting the roles of youths in supporting and sustaining democracy in Nigeria.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the techniques and modalities for conducting the research in order to collate relevant and sufficient data for the analysis. In order to effectively investigate Political Participation and Apathy in Nigeria between 2019 and 2023, the researcher adopted an appropriate method for data collection in order to achieve the study objectives. Qualitative research which is used to uncover trends of thoughts and opinion and also dive deeper in the problem, this method varies from structure to semi-structured techniques some of which in "focus group discussion and interview"

3.2 Population of the Study

The population in this study comprises of public and civil service workers; teachers, students, religion leaders and private business owner, NYSC Corp members and other citizens in the area. The population of the study can be illustrated in the table below;

Table 3.2.1 Population of the Study

S/N	Target populations	Number of people to be interviewed
1	Civil Servants	40
2	Students	40
3	Teachers	40
4	Religious Leaders	40
5	Traders	40

Source: Field Survey, 2023

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The basic random sampling approach was the sampling strategy used in this investigation. A sort of probability sampling known as "simple random sampling" involves the researcher choosing a selection of participants at random from a population. Every person in the population is equally likely to be chosen. Next, information is gathered from the greatest proportion of this arbitrary subset (Israel, 1992). By employing this sample technique, the study can focus on members of the public whose opinions will be crucial to the topic.

This sample size for this study therefore relied on the following formula as stated in the work of Nachimias (1996).

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 [P (1-P)]}{D^2}$$

SS = sample size

Z = level of significance (1.96) at 95% confidence intervals

P = the estimated proportion of the factor to be studied (50% or 0.5)

D = sampling error that can be tolerated (0.05%)

Therefore:

$$\frac{1.96^2[0.5(1-0.5)]}{0.05^2}$$

SS = 200.16.

Approximate sample size= 200.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, questionnaire are the instruments used in the collection of data.

3.5 Techniques of Data Analysis

The collected data from the field were presented and analyzed using tabulations and descriptive analysis. This both were harmonized in process of interpretation with each data corroborating the other so as to draw useful and valid conclusions.

Result and Discussion

This section presents and discussed the results of findings of objectives of this research work. Result presented include the socio economics characteristics of the respondents; perception of the various communities on causes and effects of desertification.

Table 1: Sampled Wards and Determination of Sample Size

S/N	Selected Wards	2006 Population NPC	Projected Population (2020)	Sample size
1	Arewa 1	12,409	23,562	10
2	Arewa 2	19,500	41,554	11
3	Gabas 1	28,800	63,314	13
4	Gabas 2	34,200	70,131	12
5	Kangiwa	18,500	29,318	28
6	Kudu 1	20,500	41,371	11
7	Kudu 2	29,000	64,419	9
8	Kudu 3	57,200	103,234	26
9	Shinkafi 1	18,800	29,782	29
10	Shinkafi 2	29,000	64,419	14
11	Yamma1	19,500	41,554	13
12	Yamma 2	31,000	68,112	15
	TOTAL	**318,409**	**640,770**	**400**

Source: Author's Report (2023).

The table above indicates that a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed across twelve wards in Katsina Local Government Area. However, 100 were retrieved, cleared and analyzed. It is these huge empirical data that are presented and analyzed here to enable scientific appreciation of youth political apathy in the study area.

4.2. Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents

4.2.1 Sex and Age Distributions of Respondents

Figure 4.1 and 4.3 provides data on Sex and Age distribution of respondents. Accordingly, the data indicated that (115) 29% of the respondents were female, while (280) 71% were male. The participation of women in the study is very appreciative, especially in state were women are marginalized in all spheres of women endeavour, especially in education and political participation.

However, the raw data in the figure showed that 191 respondents were between the age of 17 – 30 years and 166 are between 31 – 40 years, while 38 respondents are between 41 – 50 years. Overall, 69 were female and 326 were male respondents of this survey. Although, no bias was held constant against female, nevertheless, this is a normal pattern especially in state like Katsina, with apparent bias against women political participation.

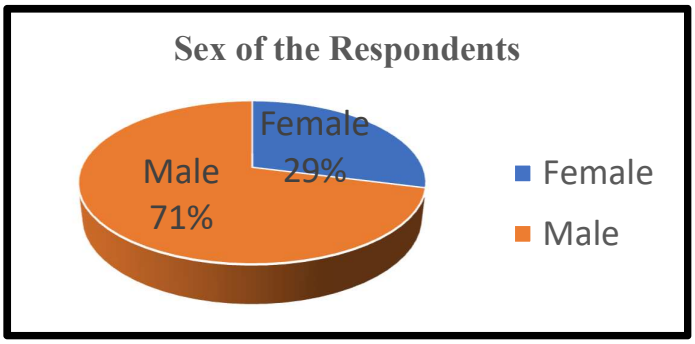


Fig 4.1 Sex of the Respondents

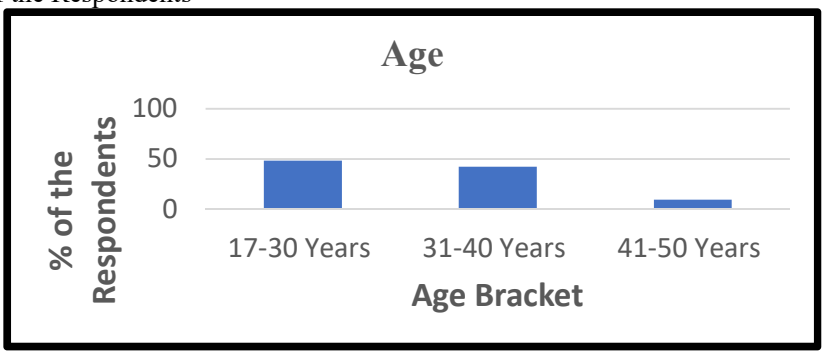


Fig 4.2 Age of the Respondents

4.2.2 Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Figure 4.3 indicates that 92% of the total respondents were Muslims. Only 8% were non-Muslims, and therefore, belonged to Christianity and other religions.

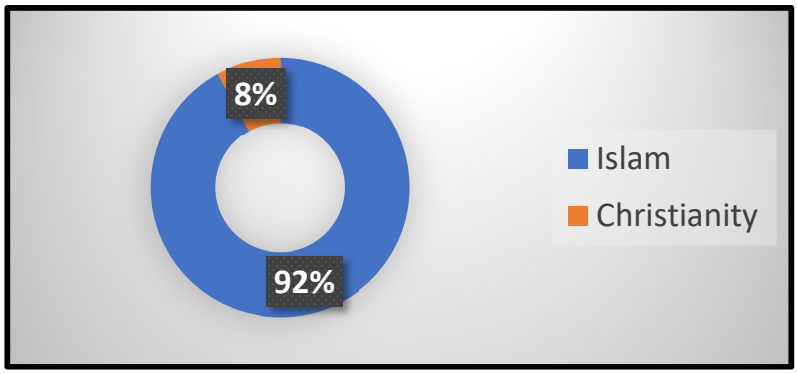


Fig 4.2 Religion of Respondents

The data in figure 4.2 did not strike any surprise. This is largely because Katsina state has historically been a Muslim dominated state. Thus, any analysis of the socio-economic and political issues of the people must take the input of Islam into critical perspective. This explains the marginal political participation of female youth in Katsina, as it is controversially and arguably claimed by many Muslim schools that Islam abhors women political participation, a view, which is subscribed by majority of the Muslim people of the state, such Qur'anic and Islamiyya Schools. Despite series of orientation and mobilization programmes, still the role of women in politics has been limited to voting only.

4.3 Tribe and Levels of Education

Figure 4.3 indicates that 356 are Hausa, 21 Yoruba and 18 Igbos. Thus, Hausa is the dominant ethnic groups. Of these numbers, 129 had Qur'anic education, 74 primary education, 97 secondary education and a total of 95 respondents had tertiary education. This shows the dominance of Hausa-Fulani in the study area, their Islamic religious affiliation as majority of them had Qur'anic education and that

majority of the respondents are generally educated. This is expected, as the focal areas of this study are headquarters of selected wards and tertiary institutions. These are the only places where the target population of youth could be easily located.

Fig 4.4: Distribution of Respondent based on Level of Education

4.1.6 Occupation of Respondents

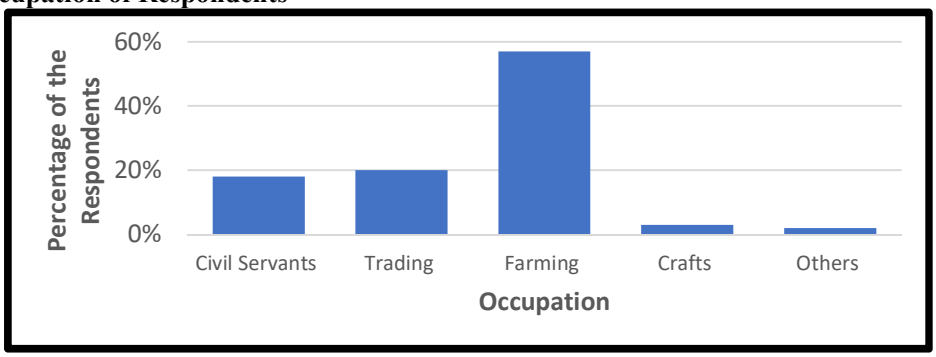


Fig. 4.5: Occupations of the Respondents

The result of occupations in the study area presented in Figure 4.5 shows various distribution of occupation which reveals that, 18% were Civil Servants, 20% were Traders, 57% were Farmers, while 3% craftsmanship and 2% are among others such as dying, black smith, artisan and carpentry. However, from the questionnaires, it was deduced that all respondents are involved in one form of agriculture to supplement their income. According to the responses by the civil servants, they all own farms as their meager income alone cannot cater for their families. Traders also engage in farming, most times with hired labour so that they can have time for their businesses. The women who responded said they assist in one form or the other to meet the needs of their families.

4.5 Respondents' Response on Participation in Political Activities

Supporting a political party and registering with a political party are basic elements of political participation. When individuals support and register with parties, it indicates readiness to partake in political activities of political parties or the overall political spectrum of the democratic processes. In this way, Figure 4.5 presents data on various ways through which youth have been participating in political party activities.

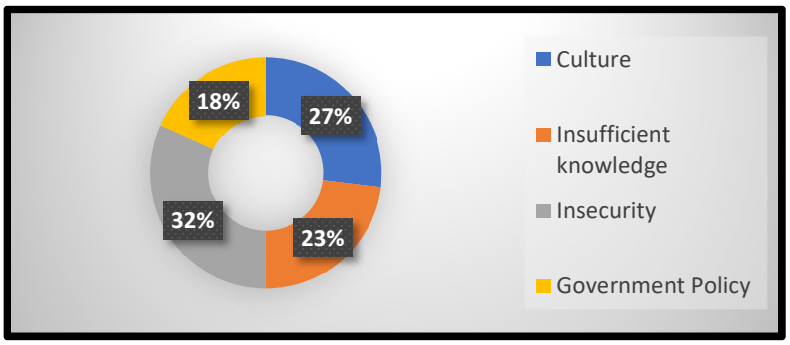
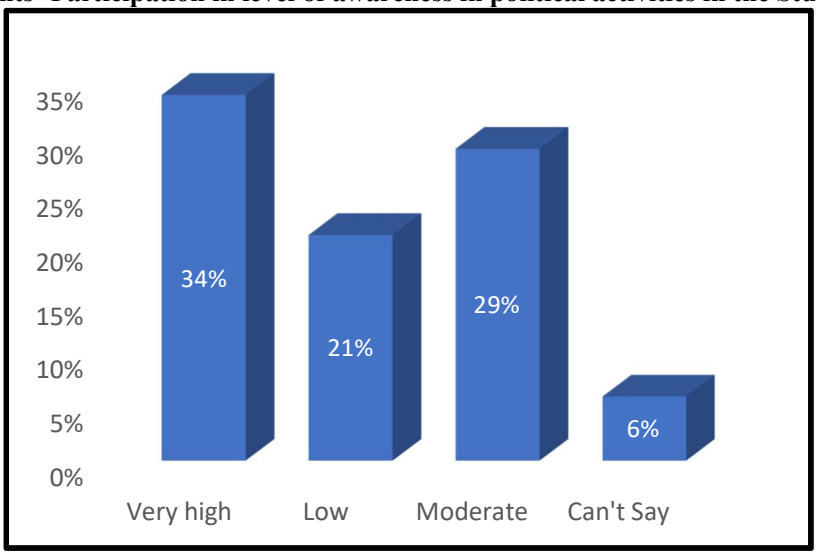


Figure 4.6: Respondents Participation in Political Activities

The data were multi-coded responses. It indicated that 27% had refused to participate in any political activities due to culture issues, 23% indicated that insufficient knowledge make them refused to participate in political activities, while 32% of the respondents refused to participate in political activities due to insecurity and 18% of the respondents indicated that government policy is what make them refused to participate in political activities. Overall, majority of the respondents had actually refused to participate in different political activities due to insecurity. This means that insecurity affected many people in refusing to participate in political activities. Thus, the question of insecurity

in the activities of political parties is very critical. Everywhere during electioneering people, activities of political parties are always dotted and punctuated by violence. Some youth (largely uneducated and poor) are used by politicians as vanguards of violence.

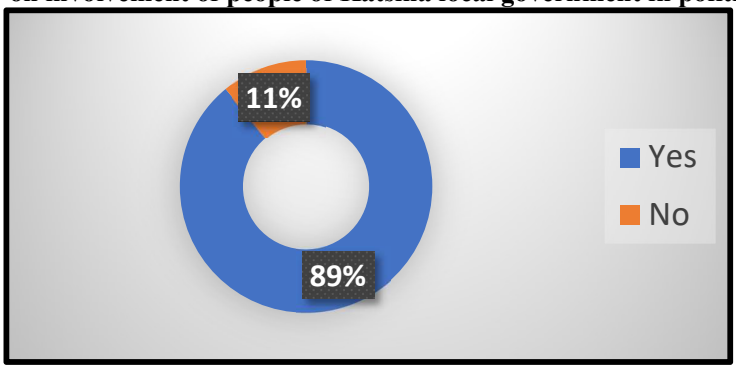
4.7 Respondents' Participation in level of awareness in political activities in the Study Area



Source: Field Work (2023).

Figure 4.6 above disclosed 134 respondents representing 34% are of the opinion that level of awareness in political activities in study area is very high. 83 representing 21% believed is low. 115 representing 29% believed is moderate. 63 representing 6% failed to respond to the question.

4.7 Respondents' on involvement of people of Katsina local government in political activities



Source: Field Work (2023).

Figure 4.7 above shows that, 352 respondents representing 89% agreed that people of Katsina local government involve in political activities while 43 representing 11% did not. This shows that people in Katsina local government involve very well in political activities.

4.8 Respondents' on what categories of people most actively engaged in political activities

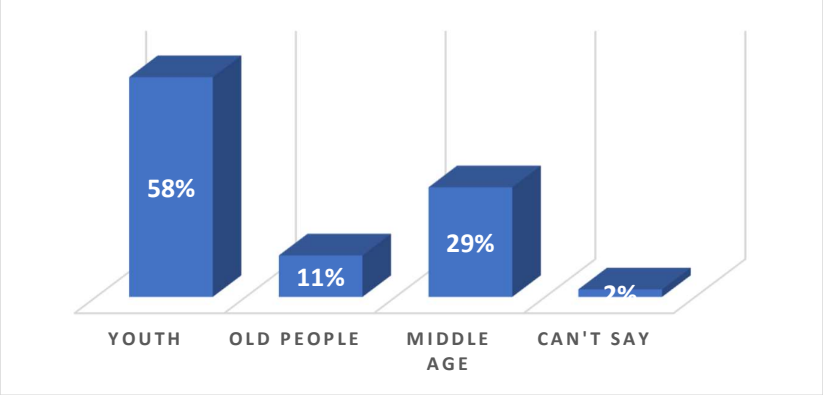


Figure 4.8 shows that 229 of the respondents representing 58% admitted that youth actively engaged in political activities in the study area are more noticeable during the election period only. 44 representing 11% are old people. 115 representing 29% manifests in both during the election period as well as after the election period and 7 of them representing 2% have no idea. From the respondents' opinion youths are the majority category engaged in political activities in the study area.

4.9 Respondents' on what do you think are the factors responsible for the political apathy.

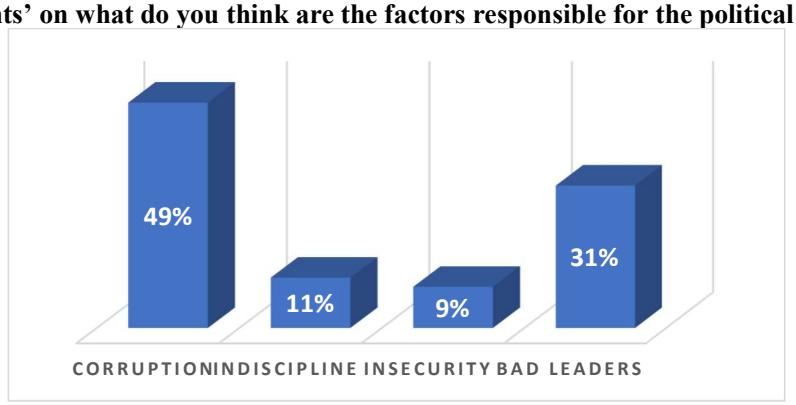


Figure 4.9 above presents the respondents' views with possible factors responsible for the political apathy in Katsina Local Government Area. The figure shows that out of the total sampled of 194 respondents 49% identified corruption as factors responsible for political apathy in the study area. 44 representing 11% are of the view of indiscipline. 36 respondents representing 9% identified insecurity, while 121 representing 31% are of the view of bad leaders. From the respondents answers it clearly indicate that high percentage of the respondents believed that corruption is the main factors responsible for the political apathy in Katsina local government area.

4.9 Respondents' on how do you rate the youth involvement in politics within Katsina local government

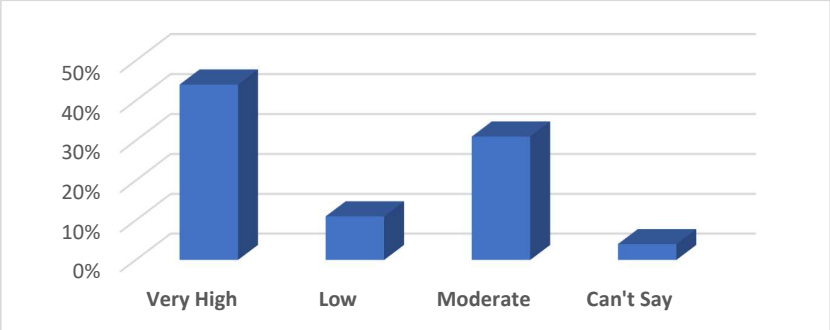


Table 4.6 shows, 134 respondents representing 34% are of the opinion that level of awareness in political activities in study area is very high. 83 representing 21% believed is low. 115 representing 29% believed is moderate while 63 respondents representing 6% failed to respond to the question.

4.10 Respondents' on how youth go to voting during election in Katsina local government

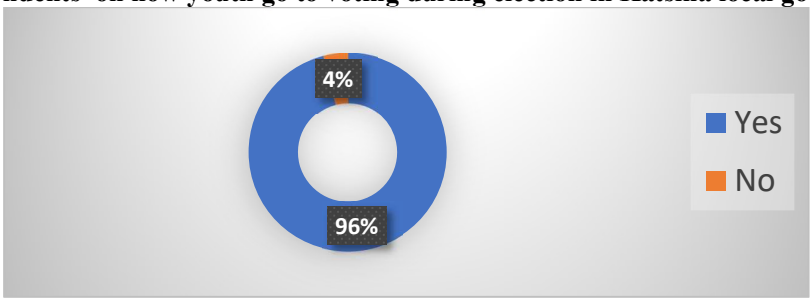
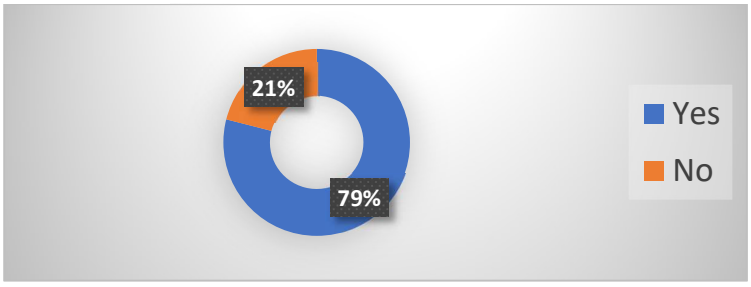


Figure 4.10 shows that out of 395 sampled respondents, 379 respondents representing 96% agreed that youth go to voting during election in Katsina local government, while only 16 respondents representing 4% said no they did not agreed youth go to voting during election in Katsina local government. Evidence to the above, it shows that youth go to voting during election in the study area.

4.11 Respondents' Participation on effect of political apathy on electoral process in Katsina local government?



From the survey, a total of 313 respondents representing 79% indicated that they agreed on the effect of political apathy on electoral process. Out of the number that respondents, 82 respondent representing 21% did not agreed on effect of political apathy on electoral process. From the respondents' answer it shows that high number of the respondents agreed on how political apathy affect electoral process in Katsina local government.

4.12 Respondents' on how political apathy affects political activities in Katsina local government.

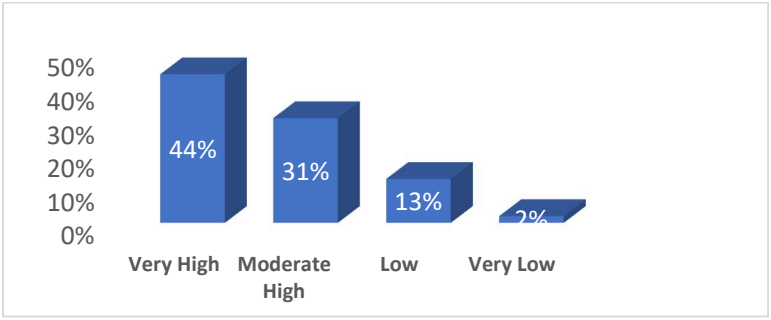


Table 4.12 above disclosed 174 respondents representing 44% are of the opinion that rate at which political apathy affects political activities in study area is very high. 123 respondents representing 31% believed is moderate high. 52 respondents representing 13% believed is low while 46 respondents representing 2% believed is very low. With this, the rate of political apathy affects political activities in the study area is very high.

4.13 Respondents' on possible effects of political apathy in your society.

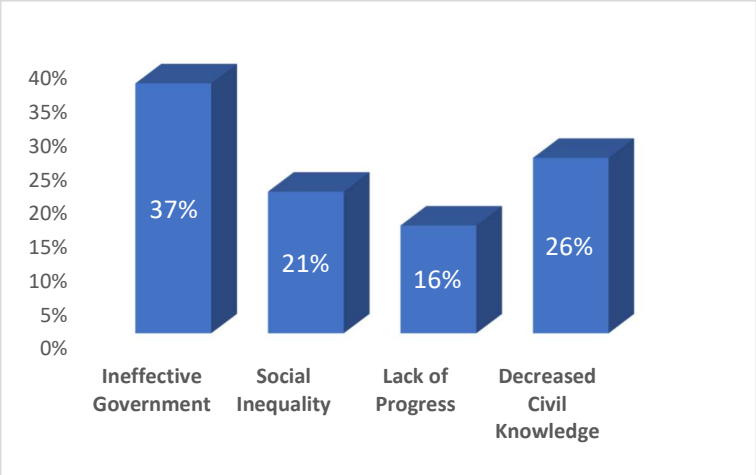


Figure 4.13 shows that out of the total sampled respondents 37% identified ineffective government is among the effect of political apathy in the study area. 21% of the respondents are of the view that social inequality are among the effect put in place. 16% of the respondents identified lack of progress as effect of political apathy in Katsina local government, while 26% of the respondents are of the view that decreased civil knowledge are among the effect put in place. From the respondents answers it is clearly indicate that high percentage of the respondents believed that ineffective government is the main effect of political apathy in Katsina local government area.

4.14 Respondents' on how good governance can eradicate political apathy among youth in Katsina local government.

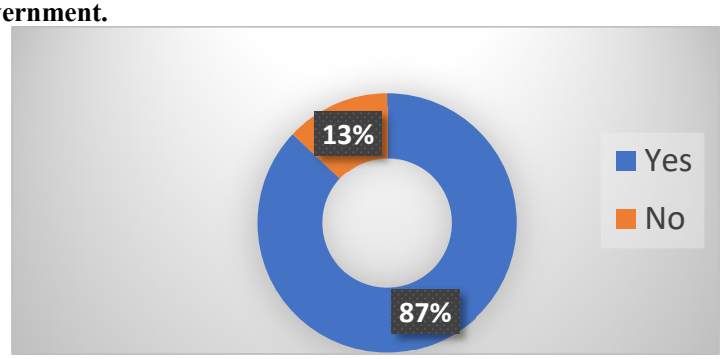


Figure 4.14 shows that out of 395 sampled respondents, 343 respondents representing 87% agreed that good governance can lead to eradication of political apathy among youth in the study area while they are aware of the existence of the measures, 51 respondents representing 13% did not agreed. This shows that the highest number of respondents agreed that good governance can lead to eradication of political apathy among youth in the study area.

4.15 Respondents' on involvement of youth in government cabinet can early reduce political apathy among youth in Katsina local government.

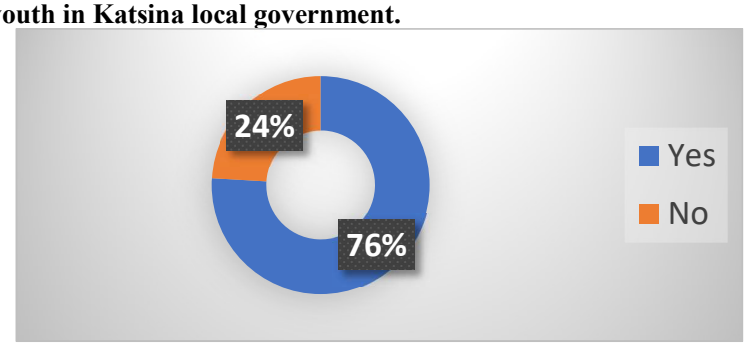


Figure 4.15 above indicated that, 301 respondents representing 76% agreed that involvement of youth in government cabinet can early reduce political apathy among youth in Katsina local government while 94 respondents representing 24% disagree. Therefore, majority of respondents agreed that involvement of youth in government cabinet can early reduce political apathy among youth in the study area.

4.3 Discussion of the Findings

Many youths in the study area do not have confidence in the electoral body, It is not surprising that over 45% of those surveyed believed that their votes do not count. INEC officials are known to have compromised elections in the country. From their responses, it is obvious that many of the youths surveyed were disenfranchised in 2023 general elections as a result of INEC's ineptitude characterized with serious logistical challenges, cumbersome voter registration process and inability of voters to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). Furthermore, because of insistence on physical voting in the constituency registered and the continuous voter registration' those who turned 18 and were far from their constituencies were disenfranchised. On the part of government, it did not do enough to allay the fear of citizens; many flee where they registered and could not vote because of the fear of insecurity.

The voters were not socialized politically particularly during the 2019 and 2023 elections and this accounted for why most of them lacked knowledge of politics. Political education is expected to be done at the family, religious and educational levels as well as undertaken by the mass media and the political parties. However, most times this is left to the mass media and politicians alone. From some of the respondents only a negligible few (30%) admitted that they have ever been educated by their families or religious institutions.

The result shows that about half (50%) of the respondents surveyed are apathetic to politics. This is a problem for the study area as political apathy, if left uncontrolled, can bring about stagnation to the development of any nation. For a nation to develop, and to have its laws function to the fullest, there must be a high level of political awareness, such that the ruled and the rulers will serve as a check on one another. The importance of elections in the development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. It is through elections we can have an orderly change of government and stable polity. If the young generation is not interested in politics/election then the aforementioned can be achieved.

Findings revealed that, the lack of a clear-cut political ideology, unequal political opportunities for women and youth and as well as what seems to be the feeling that electorates' votes do not usually count in Nigeria also accounted for the high level of political apathy on the part of those residing within Katsina metropolis as shown from the results of the study. In fact, this is in line with the findings of Agaigbe (2015), who revealed that the popular notion of many voters in Benue state, especially with regards to the 2015 general election, was that most election results were already predetermined before even the election is conducted and that no matter the level of voter turnout during elections their votes will not count. In reality, this is the feeling among eligible electorate in Katsina state, judging by the findings arising from this study.

5.2 Conclusion

Political apathy encourages recycling and entrenchment of bad leaders and those bereft of ideas who are encouraged to continue if youths do not show interest in politics. If people don't have interest in voting and lack knowledge of what is going on in their country, they may not have interest in aspiring for position of political leadership. As a result, bad and corrupt leaders will continue to have a field day and perpetuate their unpopular reign. Nigerian politics is fast becoming the exclusive preserve of the old as seen from the constant recycling of government officials particularly those in their 60s. While these old ones are unwilling to relinquish power, the young generation is unwilling to take on power as clearly shown from the latter's body language. The youths today do not have an agenda, they are directionless, lily-livered flow with the tide and only interested in joining the bandwagon. Political parties and politicians as we have rightly pointed out in this study play one of the fundamental contributory roles towards voter apathy in the country. Besides it has been allude by many of our respondents that the politicians played the most instigating roles towards their failure to

participate in the 2019 – 2023 elections. This study has revealed that the existing political parties in the country lack well-articulated polices, programmes because they are devoid of any ideological conviction, as such a great chunk of Nigerians perceives many of these parties as the same. This factor has affected the interests of Nigerian youths, despite the fact that they are the most populated, as many are uninterested in the country's elections because of the failure of the political class. It is against this background that a good number of this study's respondents failed to perform their civic duties. Reforms have to be made under this context in order to mitigate the increasing feeling of apathy by the people.

5.2 Recommendations

The researchers recommends;

Over the years the inability of the Nigerian political parties to embrace internal democracy has estranged them from a good number of Nigerians. Political parties have to embrace and promote intra-party democracy as this has its own way of projecting them well in the eyes of the people. The masses as a matter fact must not be alienated from the so called party primaries activities.

There is need for political education which must begin from the family, the first point of socialization. Parents must ensure they educate their children and wards on politics and political participation. They are to encourage them to participate actively as soon as they reach the voting age. In the same vein, religious institutions should also make it a point to socialize their youths politically. Civic education should not only be taught in schools but every teacher must ensure that they socialize their pupils and students politically. In particular, the Department of Political Science of every institution of learning in the country must ensure that they sensitize their communities on the need to participate in elections at all times particularly the periods preceding major elections in the country. The fact that 88% of the respondents opined that they will vote in the future shows that if they are effectively mobilized, they will take active part in politics. It is therefore important that the task of political education should not be left for politicians and government alone.

The inability of many of these political parties to accept defeat, most especially the two well-known political parties, whenever they lose has caused the country many lives. Parties have to therefore learn ways to accept election results without any form of manipulation. The concept of politics of "do or die" has to be jettisoned.

The basic truth is that voter mobilization is a fundamental antidote for voter apathy. But this will not be possible without the coming together of relevant stakeholders to get organized, to ensure maximum mass participation in electioneering processes. The seemingly stakeholders under this context are the electoral body, INEC, politicians, the media and the government. There is no doubt that there is a need to restructure, empower INEC for the purpose of ensuring improvement in the administration of the electoral processes. This is very germane, for if the confidence of the people is to be attracted INEC must as a matter of fact effect in house changes that have the tendencies of having it commanding public respect as an electoral body. Some of the urgently needed areas for changes include;

The electoral body should be independent from the influence of the head of the executive arm of government, which is the President. The President power to appoint and dissolve the head of the electoral body has to be abolished. This is important in ensuring the maximum autonomy of the body in discharging its management and administration duties over electoral processes. The electoral body for the purpose of efficiency has to break the burden of having to depend on the political elites for funding before discharging its duties and obligations. This is very fundamental in ensuring the self-reliance of the body as this has way of having the electoral officers owing allegiance to the politicians.

There is need for well-planned, comprehensive training programmes for the electoral staff. In order to ensure competence, INEC must as a matter of fact be awash with permanent staff. Some competent NYSC staff periodically could be employed permanently.

The electoral body has to device means of always engaging the citizenries periodically on relevant issues having to do with knowing their political rights. Voters' education should be intensified.

INEC as a way of attracting mass participation has to not only urge political parties but also set the rules of campaigning, which should be based on ideological issues and not on pettiness, which consequently has intensified voter apathy in the country.

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