

# ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE OF KATSINA – ALA TOWNSHIP TOWARDS POLITICAL THUGGERY: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELING.

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## **Abstract**

*Nigeria as a nation is currently practicing a democratic system of government. To this end, politicians have imbibed and accepted political thuggery as a means of fighting their political opponents. In this study, 210 respondents participated. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using percentages and t-test. The study revealed that, people have negative attitudes towards political thuggery; counseling will help both politicians and the general public to be aware of the dangers of political thuggery. Recommendations are also made as to how political thuggery could be arrested, uprooted and banished from the political scene through the humanizing technique of counseling.*

Nigeria as a nation has suffered greatly under many years of military rule. Today, the country is currently under a civilian government. Infact, the battle to return to a civilian regime was tough, as the military were not willing to handover the baton to their civilian counterparts. Despite all the hurdles, the battle has been fought and won at last. Unfortunately, the country is suffering a great deal from a lot of crises ranging from ethnic, religious, social as well as political issues. Commenting on the issues, Arikelola (2000:42) observed that politicians are displaying a high degree of immaturity, lack of patience, forgetfulness as well as refusal to accept defeat. The worst of it all is that politicians have imbibed and accepted political thuggery as a means of frightening and silencing their opponents. Several other issues like exchange of blows among legislators, abuse of power and threats of impeachment are ringing bells all over the country. This is not a desirable phenomenon.

Garba (2002) reported a situation at Otukpo whereby thugs were employed to disrupt a civic reception organized by the Idoma National Forum in honour of the former National Chairman of People’s Democratic Party, Chief Audu Ogbe. Infact, Otukpo was

playing host to acts of political violence and thuggery for the second time. Many people took to their heels for their dear lives.

Similarly, Agelaga (2002) reported that thugs attacked the former Niger State Governor, Alhaji Abdukadir Kure at the party's national secretariat at Abuja. His car was smashed and people were wounded as well. In fact, many politicians have resorted to the use of violence and thuggery to settle political differences. This is not a good omen for the country. Onabu (2002) quoted the former Governor of Edo State as expressing fears over the increasing wave of political thuggery in the country. Governor Igbinedion however, called on all political parties in his state to unite against thuggery. He further stated that thugs and their sponsors shall be considered as common enemies and shall be compelled to face the wrath of the law.

According to Tor-Anyiin (2007), some Nigerian politicians perceive their co-contestants as enemies by initiating and sponsoring thugs to intimidate, injure, maim, kill and destroy their properties and that of their supporters. These thugs do it joyfully and with impunity as the politicians give the weapons used for such purposes and provide legal support to help them escape the wrath of the law. The politicians feel that violence will help them to achieve their aim. Their attitude has led to unprecedented killings and destruction of human lives. Some politicians that were assassinated by political thugs were former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Bola Ige, Dr. Harry Marshall, Chief A. Dikibo and Chief Funso Williams.

In a similar vein, Iliya (2006) noted that in Nigeria, politics is played as a do or die affair. The contestants appear to say in their minds 'I must win'. As a result, they cause confusion, crises and uprising that lead to destruction of lives and property. They employ thugs and train them to scatter and destroy anything that stands in their way and kill any person that is opposed to them. Some of them have gone to the level of maiming and murder as a legitimate weapon in the struggle to acquire power. Most of the unemployed youths are trained for use in political thuggery and assassinations.

In this respect, Nigeria as a country has been thrown into political crises that must be uprooted and thrown to the background through the humanizing technique of counseling.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study set out to investigate the attitude of people towards political thuggery. The study is also aimed at offering suggestions and recommendation as to how counseling could be utilized into Nigerian politicking in order to facilitate the actualization of the gains of democracy.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is expected that, the findings of the study will assist politicians and the general public to learn to resolve issues amicably instead of resulting to political thuggery or violence

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female respondents towards the training of thugs by politicians.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of Muslims and Christians towards the role of thugs in Nigeria politics.
3. There is no significant different between the attitude of youths and adults towards the role of counseling against political thuggery.

### **Methodology**

The type of research design used for the study was descriptive survey. This type of design requires that data are collected at a particular time from a sample for the purpose of describing the population represented by the sample at that particular time. The population consisted of politicians, civil servants, and students who are eighteen years and above in Katsina – Ala metropolis. The study sample was drawn from the population by the process of voluntary acceptance. To this end, two hundred and ten questionnaires were randomly distributed among those that were willing to participate in the study. To this end, all the questionnaires distributed were retrieved and used for the study, which was made up of 210 elements. This represents 100% return rate.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used for collecting data was a four point Likert Scale known as People Attitude towards Political Thuggery Questionnaire constructed by the researchers. The first section was designed to acquire information about the background of the respondent. The second section was designed to ascertain their attitudes towards political thuggery. A Likert scale was used mixing up both negative and positive statements.

### **Validity of Instrument**

The questionnaire was given to experts in the Measurement and Evaluation of the Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education, Katsina – Ala. The items that were not relevant were thrown out. Thus, the instrument has both face and content validity.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

A test-retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the instrument. To this end, the questionnaire was administered to ten respondents. After a period of three weeks, the same instrument was administered to the ten respondents to ascertain the level of reliability. Later on, the two sets of scores were compared using Pearson

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product moment, coefficient. The correlation coefficient was .82 which showed a high degree of reliability.

### **Result Analysis**

The data collected were analysed using percentages as well as t-test for the testing of the hypotheses.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents by Gender**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	125	59.5
Female	85	40.5
Total	210	100%

Table 1: shows that the number of male respondents that participated in the study were 125 while their female counter parts were 85 number.

**Table 2: Respondents by Age.**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
18 – 30	130	61.9
30 and above	80	38.1
Total	210	100%

Table 2: reveals that of the 210 respondent that took part in the study, 130 of them were between the age bracket of between 18 and 30 years while 80 of them were between 30 years and above.

**Table 3: Respondents by Religion.**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Christian	165	78.6
Muslims	45	21.4
Total	210	100%

Table 3: presents the number of respondents by religion which indicates that 165 Christian and 45 Muslims participated in the study.

**Table 4: Respondents by Occupation.**

Occupation	Frequency	%
Students	26	12.4
Business	14	6.7
Politician	103	49
Civil Servant	67	31.9
Total	210	100%

Table 4: shows the number of respondents by occupation which include, 26 students, 14 business tycoons, 103 politicians and 67 civil servants.

**Table 5: Respondents by Educational Qualification.**

Qualification	Frequency	%
University	40	19
NCE/Diploma	95	45.2
Secondary	56	26.7
Primary	19	9.1
Total	210	100%

Table 5: presents the number of respondent by educational qualification which indicate that 40 were university graduates, 95 were NCE/Diploma holders, 56 were secondary school graduates and 19 of them were primary school graduates.

**Table 6: Attitude of Male and Female Respondents Towards Thuggery.**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	P	CV	t.cal.	remarks
Male	125	12.04	2.36	208	.05	1.980	0.07	NS
Female	85	12.02	1.96					

The result presented in table 6 shows the mean scores for each group as well as standard deviation for the two groups. Under 0.05 level of significance, the critical value is 1.980. Hence the calculated t-value of 0.07 is less than the critical value of 1.980 the null hypotheses was not rejected.

Ho2: there is no significant difference between the attitudes of Muslims and Christians towards the role of thugs in Nigeria politics.

**Table 7: Attitude of Christian and Muslim Towards Political Thuggery.**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	P	CV	t.cal.	remarks
Christians	165	9.0	1.51	208	.05	1.980	-0.05	NS
Muslims	45	9.0	33.62					

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The result presented in table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation for the two groups. Under 0.5 level of significance the critical value is 1.980, hence the calculated t-value of -0.05 is less than the critical value the null hypotheses was not rejected.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the role of counseling against political thuggery.

**Table 8: Attitude of Youths and Adults Toward Counseling Against Thuggery.**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	P	CV	t.cal.	Remarks
Youths	130	12.1	1.94	208	.05	1.980	-0.67	NS
Adults	80	12.7	2.13					

The result presented in table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation for the two groups. Under .05 level of significance the critical value of -0.67 is less than the critical value the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Responses Per item.**

S/NO	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1.	Training of thugs is a crime in our nation	137 65.2%	49 23.3%	10 4.8%	14 6.7%	210 100%
2.	Politicians have been using their thugs in setting political differences	69 32.9%	101 48.1%	27 12.9%	13 6.1%	210 100%
3.	Political thuggery is a welcome development in our country	20 9.5%	35 16.5%	60 28.6%	95 45.2	210 100%
4.	I hate politicians who employ thugs to fight their political opponents	123 58.6%	63 30%	18 8.6%	6 2.8%	210 100%
5.	The role of thugs is provide security to their employers	52 24.8%	91 43.8%	38 18.1%	29 13.8%	210 100%
6.	The role of thugs is to hammer their political opponents into proper shape	51 24.3%	81 38.6%	48 22.9%	30 14.2%	210 100%

7.	Politicians should learn to resolve issues amicably rather than resulting to thuggery	126 60%	70 33.3%	11 5.3%	3 1.4%	210 100%
8.	counseling will help in resolving the issue of political Thuggery	65 31%	117 55.7%	22 10.5%	6 2.8%	210 100%
9.	Counseling cannot create any meaningful impact on the issue of political thuggery	75 35.7%	42 20%	100 47.6%	46 21.9%	210 100%
10.	Counseling can create awareness among the political class and electorates on the dangers of political thuggery.	75 35.7%	109 51.9%	23 11%	3 1.4%	210 100%
11.	Counseling will assist in doing away with the rivalry between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.	80 38.1%	102 48.6%	16 7.6%	12 5.7%	210 100%

### **Discussion of Results**

The study was designed to investigate people's attitude towards political thuggery whether their attitudes are positive or negative. Data were collected from politicians, businessmen and women, civil servants and students. The findings of this study reveal that:

Training of thugs is a crime in our country. This is shown by high scores in agreement that it is strongly agreed and agreed put together and low scores in disagreement. For instance 88.5% or 186 respondents were in agreement, while 24 respondents or 11.5% disagreed that political thuggery is not a crime in our nation.

Similarly, on whether political thuggery is a welcome development in our country, 55 respondents or 24.2% were in agreement, while 155 respondents or 73.8% disagreed that political thuggery is not a welcome development in our country. Responses on whether the respondents hate politicians who employ thugs to fight their political opponent revealed that 186 or 88.6% agreed while 24 or 11.4% disagreed. Also,

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on whether the role of thugs is to hammer their political opponents into proper shape, the study revealed that, 132 or 62.9% agreed while, 78 or 37.1% disagreed. On whether politicians should learn to resolve issues amicably rather than resulting to thuggery revealed that 196 or 93.3% agreed only 14 or 6.7% disagree.

Furthermore, on whether counseling will help in resolving the issue of political thuggery in our country, the result revealed that 182 or 85.7% agreed while 28 or 13.3% disagreed. The result on whether counseling can create awareness among the political class and the electorates on the dangers of political thuggery revealed that 184 or 87.6% agree only 26 or 15.4% disagreed. Again, the issue of whether counseling will assist in doing away with the rivalry between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary, the findings revealed that 182 or 86.7% respondents agreed while only 28 or 13.3% disagree.

The result of this study indicates that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female respondents towards the training of thugs by politicians. Both of them agree that political thuggery is a crime to the nation. This view point has been supported by Okadigbo (1987) when he condemns thuggery and called on politicians to learn to resolve issues amicably. The political class must learn to play politics without bitterness. They must also learn to accept defeat in good faith and must be willing to congratulate their opponents in case they are defeated during an election.

The findings that both Christians and their Muslim counterparts also condemn thuggery are also a welcome development. Religious Leaders must learn to preach sermons condemning political thuggery so as to discourage their worshippers from indulging in acts of thuggery.

Furthermore, on the finding that both adults and youths accepted counseling to be incorporated in the political system of Nigeria is also a welcome development. This true because counseling consist of services that are intended to help individuals to plan their lives meaningfully and learn to solve societal problems. In this wise, it becomes necessary to introduce such a service into Nigerian political system in order to facilitate the actualization of the gains of democracy in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

The study of people's attitude towards political thuggery revealed that people have negative attitudes towards the issue of political thuggery. Most of the respondents are not interested in the training of thugs by politicians. They hate politicians who employ thugs to fight their political opponents. They study also revealed that politicians should learn to resolve their issues amicably as well as accepting defeat in good faith rather than employing thugs to fight for them. Again, the study revealed that adequate and proper counseling will help both politicians and the general public to know the dangers of political thuggery. Counseling will also help in resolving crises that exist between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That people have exhibited negative attitudes towards political thuggery.
2. That guidance and counseling services should be incorporated in the political system of Nigeria.
3. That jingles should be made on Radio and Television condemning political thuggery.
4. That, Counselors should be made to be advisers to the Executive, the Legislature and the Judicial arms of government.
5. Job opportunities should be created for the youths to enable them earn their living.
6. Counseling programmes should be featured both on the NTA and Radio condemning thuggery.
7. Thugs and their sponsors should be considered as common enemies. They should also be compelled to face the wrath of the law.
8. Religious leaders must learn to preach sermons condemning political thuggery.

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