



Research Paper

Money Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Implications for Electoral Process and Democratic Consolidation

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ABSTRACT: Money politics have gained concern in the international community as it threatens democratic sustainability across the globe. The menace seems to be the root of political crisis in Africa, particularly in Nigeria's Fourth republic, beginning from the returned to civil rule in 1999. The integrity of the country's electoral process is apparently in doubt. Primarily, the study examined implications of money politics in Nigeria's fourth republic for electoral process and democratic consolidation. It is rooted in classical elite and rational choice institutionalism theoretical frame. Study generated data from secondary sources and content analytical method was adopted. It found that: in spite of the importance of money as an indispensable socio-economic tool in party politics and election campaign, the high influence of money in politics has seriously discredited electoral process in Nigeria since 1999. This discredit, is attributed to: mass poverty leading to over reliance on the political system; influences of political godfathers, institutional decadence; poor democratic consciousness; desperation of contestants, and corrupt leadership that subvert the process. This paper argues that except these ill factors are address, democratic consolidation in Nigeria will remain problematic. However, the recommendations made in this paper will serve as policy guide to addressing the scourge.

Keywords: Electoral Process, Poverty, Money Politics, Democratic Consolidation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Money politics have gained concern in the international community as it threatens the democratic sustainability across the globe. Money politics has occupied a central stage in academic and political discourse globally because it has posed a serious challenge to free, fair and peaceful democratic elections all over the world. Globally, money-politics have deep roots and long-time historical background in electoral process. In United Kingdom, legislation to prevent excessive spending or misuse of money by electoral candidates has been in place since 1883 (Feikert, 2009). Money has been at the root of United States of America (USA) political crisis (Gillon, 2000). Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth President of the USA (1901-09) proposed campaign finance reform in 1907 to curb corruption in the expenditure of public funds in the United States election campaign (Horowitz, 2014). The corruption and abuse of the electoral process uncovered during the congressional investigations into the Watergate scandal promoted the 1974 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) which regulates financing of Federal election campaign (Horowitz, 2014). In France, the history of money politics has been traced to France's democratic elections in the 1980s and 1990s when series of high profile money politics scandals undermined the elections to the extent that within seven years eight electoral laws were promulgated (Clift and Fisher, 2004). Nevertheless, Apart from USA and France, the controversial role of money in politics has been a serious issue in many other countries like, Canada, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, Peru, Bahamas, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Honduras (Carter Centre Conference, 2003). Quentin (2005) argued that in Western Europe, as elsewhere in the world, serious money-politics and party financing scandals in the past decade have shaken the political establishment of Belgium, France, Germany, and Spain, and have contributed to a severe distrust of politicians and the perception of corruption in these countries. The failure of electoral bodies in most democracies to curb the misuse of money and ensure corruption-free electoral process as well as build public confidence in the political systems called for a significant election campaign finance reforms (Clift and Fisher, 2004; Feirkert, 2009 and Horowitz, 2014).

In Africa and particularly in Nigeria, the ravaging effect of money politics in the manipulation of the electoral process by the political elite group is worrisome. This has been more obvious since the wake of the fourth republic in 1999. The period which ushered in high hopes that democracy would improve the lives of people and introduce a just and equitable development contrary to military regime. Unfortunately, it seems that many Nigerians have been disappointed in the performance of successive democratic governments and have lost confidence in the political institutions due to the corrupt practices associated with the nation's electioneering process. For example, Kura (2011), Ibrahim et al., (2015) and Ukase (2016) argued that political opportunists and special interests individuals hijacked the electoral process thereby subverting the institutional mechanisms established to regulate the process.

The main thrust of this paper is to examine the implications of money politics in Nigeria's fourth republic for electoral process and democratic consolidation. The study is guided specific research questions: What are the historical antecedents of money politics in Nigeria's electoral process? What are the current trends on the issue of money politics in Nigeria's electoral process? What implications for the future of Nigeria's electoral process and democratic consolidation?

II. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Money Politics

According to Feikert (2009), Kura (2011), Ovwasa (2014), Ibrahim et al (2015) and Ukase (2016), money is an indispensable tool in democracy as a form of government because of its importance in the execution of a democratic election and democratic practice. Alfa and Marangos (2016) have argued that money matters for democracy because many of the democratic activities simply could not take place without money. Best (2006) describes the role of money in politics especially for those seeking political offices as the norm. Ojo (2006) conceives money as an instrument used by political parties or candidates in election campaign to secure votes. However, money politics, in terms of conceptualisation raises conflicting and varying explanations from scholars, policy analysts and politicians. According to Gillon (2000) money-politics encompasses the activities of 'big-money interests' to buy political outcomes. What this entails is that money-politics involves a situation in which 'wealthy candidates' and 'special interest individuals' employ the instrument of money to buy elections. Evertsson (2008) views money-politics as bribery and a form of political corruption. Beetseh and Akpoo (2015) conceptualised money-politics as the phenomenon in electoral process whereby contenders for elective positions use money or money is used on their behalf as an inducement to sway their support which is not based on persuading the electorates to vote according to their wish and conviction but on the influence of money that has changed hands. This postulation gives credence to our concern in this paper. The stance of this paper is that money-politics encompasses situations whereby money is used to influence the electorate to vote in favour of a candidate or a political party. In other word, money-politics involves the use of money to induce voters to vote against their wish and conviction. Aiyede (2006) lends support to the foregoing when he explained that money encourages the flourishing of corruption in Nigerian democratic process.

In addition, money politics include vote buying which in literal sense, vote buying involves a simple economic transaction. Fredrick Charles and Andrea's Schedler cited in Ojo (2006) described vote buying as a 'contract or perhaps an auction' in which the electorates sell their votes to the highest bidder. In a broad sense, it is an act intended to persuade or induce individuals to vote in a certain ways during an election. For Bowei (2008), vote buying is a situation in which political party or candidates induce voters to sell their votes in exchange for money or any other material benefits. This act involves the voters (sellers of votes) and the political parties, candidates or their representatives (buyers of votes). Van de Walle (2009) defines vote buying as a situation in which citizens are given money by candidates in exchange for their votes. This definition depicts a situation in which citizens auction their votes to the candidates who are willing to pay the most. Voters in this circumstance are expected to gain in material terms for their vote. In the same vein, Dung (2006) conceptualised vote buying as any form of persuasion in which financial gain is suggested by one person to another with the intention of influencing a person's vote. This conceptualisation presupposes that vote buying includes not only the payment of a simple bribe to voters, but also the inducement of election officials in order to favour a candidate or party during election. He identified the actors that buy votes in Nigeria to include: political godfathers or patrons in the political system; political parties which could be ruling or opposition parties, and politicians at local government council, state and at national levels. This is not without implication for the electoral process.

Electoral Process

Electoral process across the globe involves the statutory obligations and activities that must be carried out prior to the actual conduct of a democratic election. According to Johari (2013), electoral process is described in terms of nominations, canvassing campaigns and post-electoral results. What this connotes is that the process of electoral contest begins with nomination of candidates for elective offices, electoral campaigns,

polling day activities and end with post-electoral result. Harvey and Harvey (1989) conceptualise electoral process as a procedure that involves the observance of the electoral law and guidelines established for the conduct of a democratic election. This conceptualisation underlines some of the steps to be taken prior to an election as recognised by the electoral law in a democracy. These include political parties' registration, notice of nomination and Election Day, nomination of candidates by political parties, parties' primary elections, establishment of polling stations, review of voter register, political parties' campaigns, provision of election materials, training and retraining of electoral officials, polling day activities and announcement of electoral result. Martins (2017) argued that any regime that undermines an established electoral process or procedure ultimately subverts and diminishes its democratic legitimacy, regardless of whether it initially won an election. This opinion was reinforced by Ejue and Ekanem (2011) when they averred that the aim of an electoral process should be free and fair election where the candidate with the highest votes wins. Omotoso (2005) noted that electoral process is a very dynamic practice that needs to be nurtured and sustained for the development of democratic societies. For our concern in this paper, electoral process is a precondition for democratic election which must be guided by the adopted electoral law and guidelines in a democratic system.

Democratic Consolidation

The term democratic consolidation means different thing to different people. The meaning ascribe to the concept depends on individuals' empirical viewpoints as well as the context and the goal we have in mind. According to Schedler (1998), democratic consolidation is described in term of the challenge of making new democracies secure, extending their life expectancies beyond the short term, making them immune against the threat of authoritarian regression and ensure that they develop against eventual reverse waves. What this connote is that democratic consolidation encompasses the possibilities of expanding existing democratic spaces through popular legitimacy, diffusion of democratic principles and values, civilian supremacy over the military, stabilisation of electoral rules, party system building, establishment of periodic election, judicial reform, alleviation of poverty and economic development. Larry (1994) gives support to this viewpoint when he argued that democratic consolidation includes constitutional democracy and economic development. Democracy is widely considered consolidated when it adheres to democratic principles such as rule of law, good governance, independent judiciary, competitive, fair and credible elections and a developed civil society (Ovwas, 2014; Kura, 2011; Omotola, 2009; Ojo, 2006 and Ukase, 2016). For our purpose in this paper, democratic consolidation is the process of instilling democracy into the institutions of government. That is, a situation where democracy is accepted by the citizens as the ruling form of government, thus ensuring political stability and, again, minimising the risk of reversing to an authoritarian regime.

III. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The classical elite theory as developed by Mosca (1939), Michels (1962) and Pareto (1968) and the rational choice institutionalism rationalised by March and Olsen (2006) and Shepsle (2006) are ideal for the explanation on the extent to which money-politics and vote buying influenced voters' choice in Nigeria's elections and undermine democracy in the country. The political elite theorists identify the political elites in any society as a group of minority that possesses the requisite qualities to occupy social and political space. This is the ruling class that performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoy the advantages of political offices. This political elites or ruling class are often motivated by their irresistible urge for power to govern and control the majority which constitutes the masses. Thus, behind the political elite theory, power is the primary urge or focus. They employ all kinds of methods or strategies including their economic strength or power, particularly money as an instrument of influence to play upon the sentiments of the majority and find their way to political power. The rational choice institutionalism on the other hand focuses on the functionality of institutions (political parties and INEC inclusive) and the patterns, procedures and regularities produce by them for everyone to engage with one another according to a laid down rule. Institutions are equilibrium ways of doing things (Shepsle, 2006). Institutions and their arrangements are in all human society and in use nearly all the time to coordinate human and organisational behaviour. The rational choice practitioners explain the activities of power-seeking political parties within a set of institutional constraints. The political elite theorists and rational choice practitioners even though they differ in object and focus of their studies, agree on one essential premise: that institution (political parties and INEC) constitutes the humanly devised mechanisms that shape the interactions and activities of every aspiring political office holder in their struggle for power. In the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 General Elections and the various governorship, houses of assembly, House of Representatives and senate elections, the 2002, 2006 and 2010 Campaign Finance Acts were the legal instruments applied by the INEC to regulate the activities of political parties and candidates with respect to money-politics and vote buying. The Acts in terms of their content stipulate the guiding rules on campaign funding (resources acquired and spent) by candidates and political parties during the officially approved campaign period for the elections. That is, regulation on income and expenditure of political parties and

candidates during the campaign period for the election. If these elections must be free, fair, peaceful and credible, the provisions of the Acts especially with respect to money-politics and vote buying must be recognised and observed by political parties, candidates and the electorates. However, the outcomes of various elections in the country have shown that the players (political parties, candidates, INEC officials and the voters) did not comply with the Campaign Finance Acts. The electoral process has therefore been problematic. Given the fact that the political scenes were hijacked by wealthy candidates and money-bag politicians who wielded influence in elections; the elections were not well guided by the Acts. The implication of this is that the election management body, INEC in particular did not have the institutional capacity to enforce compliance to the Acts. The political parties whose primary aim was to capture political power and take over the reign of government employed all available means to get to power. This includes reckless spending by money-bags and political godfathers to induce voters and INEC officials and buy their conscience. The use of money to buy the electioneering process is a by-product of the political elite struggle to control the masses in legitimising their recruitment process. The outcomes of various elections in the current dispensation have shown that the phenomena of money-politics have escalated to a higher proportion in the country. Arguably, money-politics and vote buying are inducement process that involves exchange of vote for money. Vote buying is a give and take bargaining. The political parties or their agents (givers of money) desire to maximize their goals by using money to get votes that can earn them victory. The voters who were recipients of both financial and material gifts valued the opportunity as a means of getting their own share of the national cake. It therefore means that since the provisions of the Campaign Finance Act 2002, 2006 and 2010 as amended could not contain the excessive influence of money politics during the various elections in the country, the objective, integrity, credibility and success of the elections processes is in doubt.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in design and largely relies on secondary materials and content analytical method. Extant literatures on money politics were examined with reflections on Nigeria's fourth republic and the implications for the future electoral process and democratic consolidation in the country. Data on historical antecedent of money politics in Nigeria's electoral process were employed to give the study a robust analysis. The justification for the choice of secondary source of data and content analytical method is for the purpose of describing the situations as they occur.

V. DISCUSSIONS

Money Politics in Nigeria's Electoral Process: The Historical Antecedent

Historically, Ovwasa (2014) unfolds that the phenomenon of money-politics became prominent in Nigeria politics in the post-colonial period. The act of money politics escalated to greater dimensions during the 1979 and 1993 general elections. This was because the political campaigns for the conduct of the 1993 election involved "excessive use of money during the party primaries and the presidential elections, despite the fact that the elections were conducted under the watchful eyes of the military". He further observed that money-bags hijacked the two political parties decreed into existence by the military: namely the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). During the primaries for example, the use of money to win party nomination was pervasive while complaints of bribery trailed the results. One of the contestant who lost out in the election, as observed by Nwosu (1996) cited in Ovwasa (2014) 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 for how votes will be allocated to aspirants. The excessive use of money during the 1993 presidential election was ascribed by the President Babangida's administration as the main reason for the annulment of the election. There were claims of authenticated reports of election malpractice against agents, officials of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), voters as well as proofs of manipulation, offers and acceptance of money and other forms of bribery.

The act of money politics and vote buying became alarming since the wake of the fourth republic in 1999 as the influence of money took very firm roots in the political activities of contestants (Walecki, 2006; Aiyede, 2006; Ayoade, 2006; Ojo, 2006; Dung, 2006; Ovwasa, 2014 and Ukase, 2016). The period ushered in high hopes that democracy would improve the lives of people and introduce a just and equitable development contrary to military regime. Unfortunately, many Nigerians have been disappointed in the performance of successive democratic governments and have lost confidence in the political institutions due to the corrupt practices associated with the nation's campaign finance system. This problem has largely been blamed on the political elite groups, special interest individuals and political god-fathers. Aiyede (2006), Adeyi (2006), Babawale and Ashiru (2006), Ayoade (2006), Gambo (2006), Ojo (2006), Dung (2006), Okoosi-Simbine (2006), Kura (2011), Ovwasa (2014), Ibrahim et al. (2015) and Ukase (2016) argue that political opportunists and special interests individuals have hijacked the electoral process thereby subverting the institutional mechanisms established to regulate the process.

The outcome of the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 general elections and the various houses of assembly, House of Representatives and senate elections have produced the most alarming data about the misuse of money during the elections (Ovwasa, 2014 and Ukase, 2016). The political scene is hijacked by wealthy candidates and money-bag politicians who wielded influence in elections. The findings about the conspiratorial involvement of some high ranking officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the N23bn bribe fund facilitated by a former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, ahead of the 2015 general elections is a prominent case of money-politics in the Nigerian electoral process (Soriwei, 2015; Alli, 2016a and 2016b; Nwisi, 2016; Soriwei, Akinkuotu and Adepegba, 2017; and Nafiu, 2017). Many Nigerians are becoming increasingly worried about the impact of powerful money bags corrupting the nation's democratic institutions. The 2002 and 2006 Campaign Finance Act earlier signed could not contain the problems associated with money politics in the country. As a result, a new reform referred to as the 2010 Electoral Act was also signed to address the loopholes in the previous Act and also to curtail the negative impact of money in politics in the country.

The electoral commission by its primary responsibility provides codes of standard behaviour acceptable as a legitimate order. These rules and practices specify what is normal and must be respected and obeyed by the political parties and candidates. However, experiences have shown that these rules and practices have more often than not been manipulated, evaded and circumvented by the players and implementers of the rules (Adetula, 2006; Kura, 2011; Ovwasa, 2014 and Ukase, 2016). The rate at which the political elite groups with corrupting influence of money-bags, godfathers and special interest individuals undermine the institutional mechanism moderating the electoral process is alarming. There is consensus among scholars that political godfathers play a major role at ensuring that a proper legislative framework are not put in place to eradicate excessive use of money in Nigerian election (Ayoade, 2006; Gambo, 2006; Babawale and Ashiru, 2006; Adeyi, 2006; Alli, 2016). They argue that godfathers distort the political system, employing powerful special interests (oil companies and banks etc.) to buy the electoral officials and votes. It has now become a commonplace that special interest individuals infiltrate INEC officials in order to manipulate the electoral process. Walecki (2006), Omenka & Apam (2006), Aiyede (2006), Gambo (2006), Ojo (2006), Dung (2006) and Ukase (2016) argue that if the purpose of campaign finance reform was to limit the influence of money-politics and restore public confidence in the democratic system, the election results over the years were far different from the expectations of all and sundry.

The involvement of INEC officials in election malpractices in the country has further entrenched the act of money-politics in the country's body politics. Most often, those at the helms of affairs at the various institutions working with INEC are the political cronies of the incumbent governments. Many of these officers lack the good-will and capacity to implement the law because of the circumstances of their appointments. As there are limits in the expenditure of parties and candidates in the electoral Act, so also there are loopholes that allow political parties and candidates to circumvent the law. The money bags often capitalise on the loopholes to buy the electorate and influence votes. Some scholars believe that failure to address a host of pressing social issues; from poverty to lack of democratic consciousness are results of this political menace (Kura, 2011; Ovwasa, 2014; Ibrahim et al, 2015; and Ukase 2016). The reality about Nigerian democratic system is that big-money influences Nigerian elections and the electoral Reform Acts are undoubtedly cannot capture all the trajectories.

Issues on Money Politics in Nigeria's Electoral Process: The Current Trends

The trend in Nigeria is changing from bad to worse since the country transited from military dictatorship to democratic governance in 1999. Prior to general elections in Nigeria, especially at each of the parties' primaries, Nigerians have observed with dismay, high level of desperation on the parts of the contestants; do-or-die politics, nasty abuse and name-calling, money-politics, and slogan of ethnicity and disunity within the parties. Elections in Nigeria in the current dispensation have been characterised by a well-designed money-politics regime. This is evident in the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 general elections and the various houses of assembly, House of Representatives and senate elections in the country (Adetula, 2006; Kura, 2011; Ovwasa, 2014; Alfa and Marangos, 2016 and Ukase, 2016).

The phenomena of money-politics is alarming and escalating from one civilian transition to another. The political landscape has been hijacked by money-bag politicians, wealthy candidates and political godfathers. The act of 'see-and-buy' of votes by political parties and candidates are trendy in Nigeria electioneering process. The conspiratorial involvement of some officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the orchestrated vote buying regime is worsening the bastardised electoral system. The N23bn bribe fund facilitated by Diezani Alison-Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum Resources, ahead of the 2015 general elections is a reflection of the prearranged act of money politics and vote buying in the Nigerian electoral process (Soriwei, 2015; Alli, 2016a and 2016b; Nwisi, 2016; Soriwei, Akinkuotu and Adepegba, 2017; and Nafiu, 2017). The failure of the electoral Act to address the problems associated with money-politics in the country is a reflection of the incapacity of INEC to ensure credible election. The outcomes of various elections

in the country in recent times presuppose the fact that the electoral law has, in practice, had unintended consequences. Majority of Nigerians believed that money-bags controlled the political system and that various elections in the country were bought by the highest bidders. Political office holders such as the President or Governor have largely assumed the role of godfathers. More worrisome is that they use public funds to finance and sponsor their preferred party loyalists. Money politics and vote buying is pervasive in Nigeria at all level of elections. Political parties and politicians (political elite group) are the root of circumventing financing regulation (Adetula, 2006 and Ukase, 2016). The collaboration of INEC official in subverting the electioneering process is making mockery of democracy in the country.

In the current Nigeria democracy, the conduct of elections has assumed a new dimension of blatant and open buying and selling of votes. This is a “see-and-buy” situation; a modernised voting pattern in which the electorate (vote sellers) stylishly show their ballot paper to the agent of the political party (vote buyers) that has paid for their votes to confirm that they have voted as agreed. It is a situation in which on the day of voting people are being paid 2000, 3000, 4000 Naira to vote (Ibrahim et al, 2015; Alfa and Marangos, 2016). Elections in the country are flawed with greed, selfishness, deceit, fraud, corruption, thuggery and violence (Ovwasa, 2014). It is a do-or-die affair where credible election is unrealistic. The level of involvement of the security personnel including the army by the ruling party to pervert the electoral process is mind-boggling. The situation is worse as the electorate who are expected to be agitating for good leadership and governance are the one looking for party or candidate that is ready to pay the highest before they vote. The level of corruption, poverty and ignorance in the country has dispirited most Nigerians from all sections of the society (Ukase, 2016). This menace has constituted serious barrier to any positive thinking and action that can engender good leadership and governance. The political ship of the nation appears to be heading towards the rock as democracy which is expected to bring hope and succour to the people has been largely monetized to the extent that it has deepened the crisis of bad leadership and governance. The abuse of the electoral process and the enthronement of money-politics in the conduct of elections has created serious fissure in Nigeria democracy (Ukase, 2016).

Implications for the Future of Nigeria's Electoral Process and Democratic Consolidation

The enthronement of money politics in the country is a major obstacle to achieving a healthy electioneering process and the cause of all forms of crisis, controversies, electoral violence, institutional decadence, low democratic consciousness, desperation of contestants, manipulation of the electoral law, mass poverty, and the over dependence of the masses on the political system and corrupt leadership that subverts the system. This menace poses serious negative implications for the future of Nigeria’s electoral process and democratic consolidation in the following ways:

1. In the contemporary Nigerian society, politics appears to be the most lucrative business. The power of incumbency, money bags politicians, special interest individuals, political machines and godfathers have hijacked the electoral process thereby undermining democratic consolidation in the country. Unfortunately, desperate electorates have also given in to the practice of looking for party or candidates that is ready to pay the highest before they vote in elections. This ugly experience portends a negative direction for the future of democracy in the country.
2. Another danger pose by money politics to the future of Nigerian democracy is that if the money bags politicians, special interest individuals, political machines and godfathers continue to dictate and determine the direction of elections in the country, the perception that politics is an easy access to wealth will continue to be the prevailing expression of the character of democracy and elections in the country. This is apparently dangerous for the development of democratic governance in the country.
3. The continued use of money by political parties and candidates to manipulate the electoral process and buy electoral outcomes will continue to breed political thuggery and violence in the country. As political office seekers spend a lot of money to secure political offices, they employ the services of political thugs to ensure the realization of their political ambitions. Thuggery militarizes the Nigerian political environment and encourages violent political culture in the country. This ultimately promotes the proliferation of arms and ammunition in the country for harassment and intimidation of political opponents in order to rig elections. This menace will continue to scares away patriotic individuals from active participation in the democratic process and hinders the effort towards the consolidation of democracy in the country.
4. Similarly, money politics gives democracy in the country a name and connotation different from what it means in the developed democracies. The dangerous implication of this to the future of Nigeria’s electoral process and democratic consolidation is that, if the menace is not frontally addressed, the integrity, credibility and international image of electioneering process in the country will be permanently in doubt.

In sum, the character of Nigerian politics which largely lack in political principle and ideology, promotes the use of money as an instrument for securing victory in elections. This ultimately erodes political legitimacy and good governance which are important attributes of democratic government and shows that there is nearly a total lack of democratic process in the political system. The implication of this for the future of

Nigerian democracy is that instead of the electoral process producing credible candidates genuinely interested in developing the people and the land, the country will have rigged process that produces favoured and invariably incompetent candidates that will continue to subvert the political system. This situation will continually discourage some electorates or voters from participating in voting exercise, and thereby breeds political violence, apathy and low turnout' during general elections. If this menace is not addressed frontally the political class will continue to take advantage of it to ruin the future of the hard earned democracy and international image of the country with money politicking.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has examined money politics and vote buying in Nigeria's fourth republic with special reflections on electioneering process and the implications for her democratic international image. The study has established that money-politics and vote buying are trendy and widespread in Nigerian politics. It observed that the danger pose by the menace is that the power of incumbency, money bags politicians, special interest individuals, political machines and godfathers have hijacked the electioneering process. Sadly, desperate electorates have given in to the practice of looking for party or candidate that is ready to pay the highest before they vote. Today, money-politics and vote buying have been enthroned in the conduct of elections in Nigeria democracy. The way and manner elections are rigged through the instrumentality of money-politics and vote buying is alarming and traumatising. This, to a large extent, destabilises democracy and provoke all forms of crisis, controversies and electoral violence in the country. Therefore, the study recommends:

1. A proper reorientation of all stakeholders in Nigerian politics for attitudinal change towards having positive perception to make democracy work by ensuring that elections are conducted according to the electoral law and good conscience. The Nigerian society need a deep sense of patriotism and a devoted sense of honesty and selflessness in refusing to sell and buy vote during elections or committing any electoral offence. This is necessary because a process of free, fair, peaceful and credible election cannot only be guaranteed by strict enforcement of the officially sanctioned legal instrument.
2. Strict enforcement and stiffer punishment for the act of money-politics and vote buying to largely be a lasting panacea and be effective, the enabling legal/judicial system must be such that justice is assured at all times. This requires that all the stakeholders: the government, the electoral commission, the political parties, the candidates, the electorate, the civil society and the press must cultivate the right attitudes and commitment to make democracy work in the country.
3. More transparent and effective screening methods must be developed by the INEC and the political parties to conduct primaries that will ensure that money-bags politicians or political godfathers with overt or covert tendency to corrupt the electoral process and the electorate are excluded from selection of candidates for elective positions.
4. There is the need for electoral reform and institutional restructuring and reengineering of INEC as the main political umpire to develop the required capacity necessary to curb the act of money-politics and vote buying in Nigeria politics.
5. As manipulation of election results is getting worse, adoption of holistic electronic voting system that would eliminate tampering of the process by corrupt INEC and security officials is needed in Nigeria. With the pervasive electoral corrupt practices in the country, there is the need for political reform that will embrace technology to solve the electoral problems. Electronic voting system is the solution to the problems of PVC registration and collection as well as result falsification and delay in results announcement.
6. Finally, and more importantly, the scourge of poverty and inadequate voters' education in the country should be addressed without delay. Poverty and illiteracy motivates the act of money changing hands during elections. The current dwindling Nigerian economy must be improved upon to empower the people economically. This is necessary because where poverty is reduced to the barest minimum; the electorates will have self-esteem to make independent electoral decisions in voting for credible candidate of their choice. Therefore, there is the need to tackle these problems to eradicate corruption in Nigeria elections.

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