



Review of Democracy Values and Anti-Corruption Campaign in Nigeria: An Issue for Electoral Integrity and National Development

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Elections have offered a way through which the people freely decide who their leaders should be. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, what could be called electoral corruption was observed recently during the election process. This has stigmatized the image of the government, weakened its credibility and reduced the effectiveness of the development programmes and policies which so far have been formulated. The objective of the study is to review democracy values and effort of anti-corruption campaign to achieve electoral integrity for national development. The study adopted a contents analysis, secondary data were gathered from the work of scholars, empirical studies and theoretical framework was made to arrive at a complete understanding of the trends in democratic process and anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria. The study concluded that if societies were not corrupt, if the elite, officials and bureaucrats maintained probity, social development would be faster. The study recommended that for a complete overhauled electoral system and further deepened the democratic ethics that will respond to Nigeria democratic evolution as a country and whose results will adequately mirror the preference of the voting public those who are involved in electoral corruption should be exposed and punished, this will set the nation on the path of good governance which broadly equates genuine popular democracy.

Keywords: Ant-corruption, democracy, election, national development, political, governance.

Introduction

Democratic governance with its ideal of elective representation, freedom of choice of leaders, rule of law, freedom of expression, accountability among others has become the acceptable system of government all over the world. It is a form of government in which the supreme power of a political community rests on popular sovereignty. There are arguments that the character of party politics in Nigeria is such that the political party in power at the center stifles opposition parties. In the long-drawn controversy, party politics in Nigeria's democracy practice since 1960 shows that any political party in control of the apparatus of state, principally gained and sustained by control of the economy, plants moles and disruptive elements in opposition parties to create instability and render them ineffective to compete for power. Oyovbaire (1987) noted that democracy as a system of government seeks to realize a generally recognized common good through a collective initiation and discussion of policy questions concerning public affairs and which delegates authority to agents to implement the broad decisions made by the people through majority vote ^[1].

All over the world, especially among developing countries, corruption incapacitates economic growth and development, especially among developing countries; this negative impact is associated directly or indirectly with many anti-developmental consequences like socio-political unrest and low standards of living. Nlerum (2007) asserts that corruption in official circles is tacitly accepted as an official activity in Nigeria. This is an affirmation of the predominance of corruption in Nigeria's public sector ^[2,3].

Statement of the Problem

Elections are very central to the practice of democracy all over the world. Elections have offered a way through which the people freely decide who their leaders should be. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, what could be called electoral corruption was observed recently during the election process; this includes purchase of votes with money or promises of office and special favours, with intimidation and interference with freedom of election ^[4]. Corruption by political office-holders and bureaucrats in Nigeria has stigmatized the image of the government, weakened its credibility and reduced the effectiveness of the development programmes and policies



which so far have been formulated. The question is what has made elections in Nigeria to constitute a menace?

Objective of the Study

To point out democracy values and anti-corruption campaign as effort to achieve electoral integrity for national development

Research Methodology

The study adopted a contents analysis which is qualitative in nature. It reviews data drawn from secondary source. Data were gathered from work of scholars, related literatures from journals articles, text books, speeches of notable personalities as well as online information to arrive at a complete understanding of the trends in democratic process and anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The virtues of Democracy:

Beyond Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as "government of the people by the people and for the people", scholars has espoused various virtues of democracy in their definitions. Kabongo (1986) assert that democracy from these stand points is thus expected to lay foundation for a sustainable social, political and economic order. Equally, the above virtue raise democracy beyond the mere rituals of voting and elections to one that ensures co-existence of a plurality of opinions guaranteed by freedom of expression under the rule of the majority^[5]. Consequently, under a democratic government various groups are expected to be able to articulate and press their demands thereby contributing meaningful into policy making process. Sayuti (2016) noted that democracy is a system, which not only accommodates varying reviews in the society but equally allows for their self-expression and participation in the whole societal process^[6]. To some analyst, our democracy has a bleak future. It can have future only if our politicians cease to be power mongers^[7].

Elections and Democracy:

Undemocratic elections are those elections in which there may be only one person or a list of candidates for elections posts with no alternatives choices. Such elections may offer several candidates for each office, but ensure through intimidation or rigging that only the government approved candidate is chosen. Other elections may offer genuine choice but only within the incumbent party. These are not democratic elections (Kirkpatrick, 1984). Collier and Vicente (2007) noted that, in many of the newly democratic low-income countries, the only aspect of democracy that has been introduced is elections. But significantly, within these societies, there are neither 'checks nor balances' upon the use of power, nor effective rules for the conduct of the election.

This is why records of elections in Africa and other low-income democracies are not encouraging.

Collier and Vicente (2007) added that the essence of election is that it offers preference to the electorates who can decide between alternatives. Although in Africa, likely reasons for failure of most elections to discipline governments into improved performance is that the participants rely upon illegitimate strategies to victory.

Mimiko, (2011) in Awolowo (1981) noted that election rigging and other kinds of electoral malpractices most be totally out lamed in future elections. One of the major causes of the failure of our first experiment in democracy in the first republic was the blatant rigging of elections on two occasions. The first rigging created a tremor and alarm; the second generated a disastrous quake, eruption and violence, the seismic effects of which still linger with us^[8, 9].

Electoral Bodies in Nigeria:

Although the origin of electoral bodies in Nigeria is traced to the period before independence when the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was established to conduct the 1959 elections, the country has not had a consistence experience of electoral democracy that should ensure the institutionalization of a single electoral body. Thus, electoral management in Nigeria has been characterized by instability. Such bodies have experienced dissolutions and recreations in the country's four decades of existence. the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), established in 1960 was dissolved after the military coup of 1966, in 1978, a new Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was constituted by the regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo, FEDECO organized the elections of 1979, which ushered in the second republic under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It also conducted the general election of 1983^[10]. In December 1985, the military government of General Sani Abacha established the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) which conducted another set of elections. These elected institutions were not inaugurated before the sudden death of General Abacha on June 1998 aborted the process^[11, 12]. In 1998 General Abdulsalam Abubakar's administration dissolved NECON and established the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), INEC conducted the transitional elections that ushered in the Nigeria fourth Republic on May 29, 1999, and other elections till date^[13].

Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC):

Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission was inaugurated on September 29th, 2000 as the hub of Nigeria's fight against corruption. The commission is to receive complaints, investigate and prosecute offenders. It is also to educate and enlighten the public about and against

bribery, corruption and related offences. Of particular interest is its role of reviewing and modifying the activities where such practices may aid corruption. Thus, it has a role to play in cleaning the electoral system of political corruption.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC):

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is the second anti-corruption agency set up by the government of President Obasanjo. Its focus is to combat financial and economic crimes. The commission is empowered to prevent, investigate, prosecute and penalize. It is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the provisions of other laws and regulations relating to economic and financial crimes, including: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Established Act (2004), the Money Laundering Act 1995, the Money Laundering (prohibition) Act 2004, the Advance Free Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995, the Failed Banks Recovery of Debts and Financial Institutions Act 1991, and Miscellaneous Offences Act ^[14].

Electoral Governance:

Electoral governance is the wider set of activities that creates and maintains the broad institutional framework in which voting and electoral competition take place. It is the outcome of:

- Strategic calculations and moves by key political actors.
- The social structural context that defines power relations in society.
- The path contingencies that shape the trajectories and outcomes of democratic transitions.

The important point is that the rules of electoral competition and electoral governance are subject to change to mutations in politics and power relation society. They are underlined by struggles by stakeholders and political actors who work to improve chances in the scheme of power. Thus the effort to combat corruption must engage this process. Indeed, electoral governance provides a meeting point for all anti-corruption agencies and the election management body.

Corruption and National Development:

Terlumon (2015) noted that the study in 1996, by transparency international and Gottingen University ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt nation among 54 nations on the study. Two years later, perception (index), survey of 85 countries also ranked Nigeria No 81 in 2009, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) survey of 85 countries, Nigeria's image did not improve of the 91 countries surveyed in 2011, and Nigeria ranked 90 of the countries studied ^[9, 13].

Recently Global anti-corruption watchdog, Transparency International (TI), has again ranked Nigeria low in its 2017 corruption perception index (CPI). The latest ranking has Nigeria in the 148th position of 180. the country according to the CPL, scored 28 out of 100, this latest placement indicates

that the country has not made progress in its fight against graft. In summary, in the 2016 rankings, Nigeria scored 28. In 2015, it scored 26. The year before that, it scored 25. In 2014, the country scored 27 and 25 in 2013. In 2012, the country's score was 27 out of 100. According to TI higher levels of corruption are common in countries where there is media and civil society repression.

Countries with low level of corruption, risk can be insured and this attracts investment flow. Consequently, countries with high level of corruption have serious problems in attracting foreign direct investment. Governance issues in the modern globalize economy includes issues of foreign direct investment and the transfer of new technology. It is on this note that Ogundiya (2009) noted that corruption is a huge challenge in public administration in Nigeria ^[15]. It is at the core of crisis of governance and legitimacy, the establishment of stable democratic order, rule of law, development and the welfare of citizens of all forms of corruption, political corruption has posed a major obstacle to national progress in Nigeria.

Empirical Studies

Pedro and Aurara (2006) modeled the behavior of autocracy versus democracy using a microeconomic framework. The study assumed that autocracy rulers have a monopoly over the bribes market, whereas in a democracy conflicting groups compete in the bribes market. In times of electioneering in democracy, oppositions convince voters of the existence of corruption (bribes and nepotism) in order to gain their votes. The models constructed produced results that agree with well-known stylized facts that; the level of corruption is lower in democracy than in autocracy and that the level of corruption is higher in more regulated economies. The interesting observation here is that the study focused on bribery and nepotism, a common brand of corruption that may not be aligned alongside macroeconomic variable like inflation, GDP or capital expenditure. The findings appeared consistent with the situation in Nigeria ^[10].

The Nigerian economy is highly regulated and highly corrupted with public authorities susceptible to corruption. The elites, politicians and public officers, appear to be stronger than the existing institutions or regulations. The government officials take and give bribes depending on their regions of origin and the interest they are pursuing; hence, the need for an appropriate model of public officer's corruption tendencies in Nigeria.

Ajie and Wokekoro (2012) examined the impact of corruption on the economic growth and development of the Nigeria economy for the period 1980 – 2011 using Cochrane-Orcutt method. The macroeconomic variables employed were corruption perception index, Gross Domestic Product (GDP),

unemployment rate, debt stock, government expenditure and political stability. One of the recommendations was that the government should develop the political will to prosecute anyone found guilty of corruption to serve as a deterrent to others. It is indeed strange that with the aid of macroeconomic models that provided no room for examination of the corrupt individual would recommend individual punishment as solution to corruption in Nigeria ^[1].

Bamidele, Joseph and Oresajo (2013) investigated the channels through which corruption impacts and frustrated the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) in Nigeria for the period of 1970 to 2010. The technique used was the structural vector Auto regression (SVAR) ^[11, 14]. The variables used were corruption perception index, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, Secondary School Environment rate, life expectancy, government expenditure and investment and oil exports. It can be noted that all the variables used were macroeconomic aggregates. They recommended that government in Nigeria should withdraw from services to being a regulatory body. We can however note that even in its role as a regulatory agent, corruption has continued, blossomed and become all encompassing.

There was no available study on record and none of the above empirical studies point out democratic values and Anti-corruption campaign for electoral integrity and national Development of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

To properly understand the issue of democracy, corruption and electoral system in Nigeria context this study adopted two theories:

- i. The group Theory
- ii. The extractive corruption theory
- i. **The Group Theory**

This theory was propounded by Arthur Bentley. It received the blessing of scholars like David Truman, Robert Daniel, Grant McConnell, Theodor J. Lewis, Earl Lathans among others. They saw power as diffused among many interest groups competing against each other. Earl Lathan described society as a simple universe of group which combine, break and form coalitions and castellation of power in a restless alteration. The adoption of this theory as a basis for the examination of the role of political parties is as a result of the inter play of forces and struggle for power among different political parties which are formed along various ethnic/religions groups in the Nigerian society which resulted shortly after independence.

2. Extractive Corruption Theory:

It State that State is the stronger part in the state-society relationship. The state is symbolized by the ruling class/elite while the rule represents society significantly; the ruling elites

are the strongest force in society. This elite or class uses the new-patrimonial states in particular put differently; the theory posits that the state is not only the strongest force in society, but also many centers of power. Okechuku and Inya (2011) noted that the ruling elites use and misuse the power of the state primarily to safeguard their own corporate interests, to the detriment of the majority. They use violence, force and persuasion to command respect. They may use sophisticated institutional arrangements like presidentialism, dominant-multi-single party system and the cooption of rivals in order to restrict participation and power sharing ^[9].

The theory also emphasized the well being known expression that all power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. That is, more political power is concentrated exclusively in the hands of few individuals, the greater the temptation for power abuse, selfish wealth-seeking and primitive accumulation.

In Nigeria, the ruling elites uses or misuses state powers to plunder resources which would have being used for the country development for their personal gains. Most of the resources which are ear-marked for development project developed wings and fly to people's pockets (elite). It is sad to note that elites in Nigeria have established hegemonic circle who siphoned the country's wealth for personal used. They are composed of rather small elites of politically and economically dominating families their corrupt act are responsible for Nigeria under development ^[1, 11].

Conclusion

In the light of the data emanated from this study almost all the government that came into power in Nigeria has tried to fight the malaise of corruption. It is clear that Nigerians are aware of the Anti-corruption campaign, but still attributed it to mere pretense of virtue. If societies were not corrupt, if the elite officials and bureaucrats maintained probity, social development would be faster, richer and more socially beneficial. Freedom from corruption particularly at the top level of policy formulators and executors is a requirement for the success of development.

Recommendations

For a complete overhauled electoral system and further deepened the democratic ethics that will respond to Nigeria democratic evolution as a country and whose results will adequately mirror the preference of the voting public those who are involve in electoral corruption; votes buying, rigging, eruption and violence should be expose and punish, this will set the nation on the path of good governance which broadly equates genuine popular democracy.

The two anti-graft agencies, ICPC and EFCC should establish their offices in all the 36 states across the federation and this

should be extended to each local government in order to checkmate corrupt practices.

- iii. There is the need to democratize access to the good things of life through deliberate effort at restructuring the character of the Nigeria state and working on improving the material conditions of the people. That is, there should be good governance, because it is based on the establishment of a representative and accountable form of government, the primary of the rule of law, plurality of interest and degree of transparency should ordinarily compliment the sustenance of democracy. Without the driving force of legislature, enduring good governance is at risk while sustainable democracy is a mirage.
- iv. National Assembly should commit itself to fighting corruption ad abuse of power in its legislative agenda and support the executive in its effort to eradicate the menace of corruption in Nigeria.

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