

Corruption And Electoral Process In Nigeria: Examining The 2015 General Election

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Abstract: Corruption is one of the socioeconomic malaises that bedeviled the Nigerian State for many decades which virtually eroded all aspects of good governance and effective service delivery to the populace. It has affected democratic governance particularly electoral process with vote buying, bribing of electoral body officials and manipulation of the entire process. This paper investigated how corruption affected the process and outcome of the 2015 General Election. The methodology adopted is qualitative case study of data collection and analysis where some agencies and stakeholders that are related to the area of study were selected for interview including INEC, EFCC, politicians, party stakeholders, academicians and members of the general public through focus group discussion. The paper discovered that, the entire process of 2015 General Elections was affected by corruption and corrupt practices in terms of using public treasury for campaign activities by politicians from the two major parties; APC and PDP in their campaign and other electoral activities comprising of vote buying, excessive media campaign, spending above limit and bribing of INEC officials. The paper recommends that, for corruption to be eschewed in the electoral process, the INEC should be allowed a free hand in running the elections and the EFCC should be involved in screening contestants for political office and violaters of electoral laws should be banned from active politics permanently. The paper contributed to the existing knowledge by presenting an area that has not been given adequate attention particularly in the methodology of research of this nature.

Keywords: Corruption, Election, Electoral Process, Vote Buying, Campaign.

1.1 Introduction

Corruption is a cancer that impedes any society from fair and equitable distribution of resources and it leads to lack of accountability, credible leadership, political and socioeconomic development (Ackerman, 2000, Nield, 2002, Hoffman, 2002 and Bailey 2006). Corruption is even more detrimental in political arena as it produced a faulty process of elections and undesired leadership that has no national interest but rather self service and personal aggrandisement (Ogundiya, 2009). There are many dimensions of corruption from bribery, extortion, bureaucratic abuse, illegal practices to the electoral corruption which is the major concern of this work. Corruption is a great obstacle to free and fair elections in Nigeria (Ogundiya, 2010 and Olarinmoye, 2008). Electoral process in Nigeria is bedeviled with corruption and corrupt practices including vote buying, bribing of electoral officials and security personnel, buying of party agents for anti-party activities and rigging of elections (Adetula, 2008 and Human Rights Watch, 2007). Thus,

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corruption has negative impacts on elections and electoral process in Nigeria. The 2015 General Elections is seen as one of the most credible elections in Nigeria with a difference as it set the foundation of unprecedented political development where the incumbent Party was defeated in the elections (Adeniyi, 2017). Despite the widely acclaimed credibility of the 2015 General Elections, there was no election in the history of the country that money politics played a greater influence where trillions of Naira (billions of dollars) were allegedly spent in the electoral process (EFCC, 2017 and INEC, 2017). This work will examine the trend in which corruption affects the electoral process in the country during the 2015 General Elections.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The paper used two theories to explain the context of the work; Clientalism and Broken Windows Theory. The two theories are explained below and then integrated in practical applicability of the work.

2.1 Clientalism

Clientalism has been developed in the 20th century as a framework for explaining political corruption and electoral process globally. It initially originated from the Greek language which refers to obey and patronize (Morse et al, 2010). Clientalism is a process of political strategy and mobilisation of politicians and electorates for power control. It involves a complex network of client-patron relationship reaching different segments of the society including politicians, political parties, administrators and electorates (Roniger, 2004). Clientalism is a framework developed to explain the political economy of leadership and governance (Daramont, 2010).

Clientalism is a model that explains vote buying, rewarding opposite politicians and voters for switching votes in favour of their clients in an illegal way that leads to corruption and abuse of political offices. The above means that, the political process is corrupted by manipulation and malpractices where corrupt political office holders rule for personal interest and distribute resources and benefit to their patrons instead of fair and equitable allocation (Morse et al, 2010). A good practical example is Nigeria where vote buying and bribing of politicians and electoral officials has been institutionalized for decades. A patron-client relationship emerged in the process of struggles for power particularly in a democratic regime during elections (Isaksson & Bigsten, 2013). Clientalism is harmful to democracy as it slows economic development, strangulates democracy, institutes dictatorship and abuse of political offices as well as entrenches massive political corruption (Stocks, 2013: 67).

In linking this theory with this study, Ogunidiya (2009) identifies that, Nigerian state is a cliental and prebendal politics where elites acquire power at all cost for personal wealth accumulation using their client in a patron-client relationship during elections. Vote buying and bribing their ways into the elective offices are perpetuated at all levels. In addition, the examination of the mechanism for acquiring power and what the rulers did with the power after election is a clear clientalism in Nigerian context as they bargain and re-bargain power and votes for personal benefits.

2.2 Broken Windows Theory

This theory was developed by two scholars; George Kelling and James K. Wilson in 1982 (Alford, 2012). The theory suggests that if a typical window is broken in a house and is left unrepaired other windows too might gradually break and thus, all the windows in the house will break leading to the collapse of the house in the long run (Alford, 2012). This is how corruption affects the society. If minor corrupt practices like bribery and abuse of due process are tolerated in a state, major ones will flourish and within a short period of a time the society will be virtually corrupt in all aspects.

Corruption affects people's perception of their political system and its performance. It breeds corrupt politicians who create distrust in the society and destroy societal norms. Corruption alters fundamental understanding that the people have of their government and politics. A less corrupt society pursues common goods for all while a highly corrupt society is committed towards evil and bad governance (Alford, 2012). The theory has four major assumptions as discussed below.

The first assumption is country's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is directly correlated with its global competitiveness and socioeconomic wellbeing. The lower the corruption level the higher the economic development and vice versa. The second assumption is corruption has direct impact on human development which means it stagnates general development of a country. The third assumption is there is a strong bond between corruption level and civil liberties such as freedom of speech, opposition and fair elections and finally, the fourth assumption is there is a linear relationship between corruption and democracy as countries that are well democratized with better institutions are less corrupt and conversely, the most corrupt are less democratic in nature.

The above theory is related to this work especially in applying it in Nigerian electoral context where citizens' perception was altered by corrupt leaders to have perceived their votes as items for sale during elections with weaker political institutions and less democratic governance emanating from corruption and tolerance for corrupt practices which collapsed the entire political and economic system in the country.

2.3 Applicability of the Theories in the Context of the Research

Clientalism explains that, during elections and struggles for power, power brokers bargain and negotiate for votes and political support to emerge into power for their personal enrichment. This is practicable in Nigeria where it went to the extent of vote buying and bribing of stakeholders in politics to secure power for future benefit which is clientalism in practice. On the other hand, Broken Windows Theory emphasises that, once minor offences are tolerated in the society it will lead to greater corrupt practices which will collapse the political and socioeconomic systems of the country as in Nigeria where tolerance for bribery led to massive corruption especially in the electoral process.

1.3 Literature Review

This section examined critically and analytically various scholastic expositions on the concept of corruption, nature of corruption in Nigeria, its dimension, manifestations and impacts on the political and socioeconomic development of the country. In addition, the section also discussed extensively the 2015 General Elections. The literature was arranged in a thematic form under sub-headings for better clarification.

Concept and Nature of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption is commonly but, unofficially conceptualized as the misuse of public office for private gain (Asobie, 2012:2). The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that the "State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power" (Nigerian 1999 Constitution Section 15.5). Similarly, the Act establishing the Nigerian Independent Corrupt Practices (ICPC) criminalises corruption. According to Transparency International, corruption is: "Misuse of entrusted power for private gain" (TI 2013). Corruption includes abuse of power, but it is a larger concept and a much more serious issue than the misuse of public office for private benefits. Corruption is the breach or perversion of legal rules, established procedure, and code of conduct or social norms and values in the service of unethical or illegitimate ends (Asobie, 2012:5). Although, it is difficult to agree on a precise conceptualization of corruption, many scholars are at a consensus that corruption is refers to act in which the power of public office is used for personal gain in a manner that contravenes the rules of the game (Nye, 1967 Erero and Olodoyin 2000; Jain, 2002; Ogundiya 2009).

The issue of corruption continues to draw lots of scholastic attention in Nigeria as a result of the negative impression and reputation that Nigeria earned for herself in corruption and corrupt practices. It is seen in Nigerian environment as an act deliberately perpetrated by policy makers (Ackerman, 1999:10) and a contradiction of democratic values and principles by politicians thereby thwarting accountability and transparency (Ackerman, 2000). Corruption is systemic in Nigeria leading to a particularistic political culture in which values are allocated based on ones's connections in the society and not merit (Asobie, 2012:14). The weakening of political institutions and lack of political willingness in combating corruption made it a bane for good governance and development in Nigeria (Saliu, 2012). The efforts to fight corruption were sabotaged by policymakers as anti-graft agencies were politicized and turned into a tool for intimidation of opposition (Fatai, 2012).

The endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria has been identified as "Clientalism, Prebendalism and Patrimonialism where leadership has been turned into a business venture of acquiring power for personal wealth accumulation and incurring favours on kiths and kins unnecessarily (Ogundiya, 2010). Corruption is exhibited by elites in forms of bribery, extortion, nepotism, cronyism, patronage, graft and embezzlement (Ojukwu and Shopeju, 2010). Corruption has been institutionalized in the entire Nigerian system including political, administrative, and bureaucratic (Aluko, 2002). Corruption in Nigeria has been perceived as a brazen squander of public treasury by office holders impoverishing the masses and leading to low infrastructural development (Agbibo, 2011). Corruption in Nigeria is perceived either in the form of grand, bureaucratic and legislative corruption (Jain, 2001). Corruption in Nigeria has been seen as the jumbo payment of salaries to political office holders while paying the average worker a meager amount not plausible for survival (Ajayi, 2012).

Electoral Corruption in Nigeria

Nigeria is a democratic state today but its electoral system is faulty and even the electoral system of the so called advanced democracies too are faulty (Ackerman, 2000). The corrupt political process has entirely corrupted the political and socioeconomic aspects of the country including elections and electoral process in Nigeria (Ackerman, 2000). The corruption in the political system includes the demand for electoral politics, the extensive use of clientalism in political appointments and distribution of societal resources and the use of dubious electoral malpractices (Balboa & Medalla, 2006 & Bailey, 2006). The Nigerian elite is parasitic and exploitative feasting fat on national treasury which made them to form a criminal syndicate who manipulated the process of consolidating themselves into power through maneuvering the political process including vote buying and rigging of elections results (Ogundiya, 2009). It is obtainable within our political system and behaviour that vote buying and selling, voting for ethnic and religious sentiments and all sorts of irregularities are entrenched in our democratic system. Such behaviours corrupted the masses too since they are a party to it.

The major impediment behind free and fair elections in Nigeria is political corruption (Ogundiya, 2010 and Olarinmoye, 2008). The impacts of such corruption on the politics of the country include crisis of legitimacy; lack of

party ideology, weak political institutions; economic underdevelopment and political violence (Ogundiya, 2010). The role of “Godfatherism” initiated electoral corruption (Olarinmoye, 2008). Some power brokers with sufficient financial muscles sponsored their anointed godsons for political offices in return for lucrative contracts and spoils of the public treasury looting. They sponsored thugs, bribed the electoral stakeholders, influenced voters through vote buying and all sorts of electoral manipulation to ensure that their candidates scale through and control power at all levels (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

There are various explanations advanced by scholars on the major causes of corruption in Nigeria including; poverty and poor condition of work (Asobie, 2012), economic bargains and activities of multinational corporations (Ackerman, 2000 & Knuckles, 2006), rent and rent seeking (Mauro, 1998), weak political institutions and low human development indicators (Mbaku, 2010 & Obazee, 2014), social and political factors (Dike, 2002 & Ikubaje, 2014), and prolong military rule (Shehu, 2006).

In addition, this study identified electoral process as the major cause of corruption in the country in this way; leaders are elected into political offices in order to provide selfless services, accountability, transparency, make good policies, implement the policies, sanction offenders and provide basic necessities of life. In Nigeria, the aim has been defeated as the electoral process produced rulers who served themselves and entirely relegate all aspects of good governance and social services in favour of personal accumulation. Thus, election begets corrupt public office holders and at large corruption itself.

Manifestations of Corruption in Nigeria

Manifestations of corruption can be measured in two ways. The first method is using the Corruption Perception Index ranking by Transparency International while the second one is the utilisation of what appears on ground from a specific country over a given period of a time. The first method is conducted annually taking world countries based on ranking of some carefully selected indices such as the level of bribery, indicators of governance and illicit inflows or outflows of cash from a particular country. The Transparency International identified Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world emerging as the first most corrupt in 1996, 1997 and keeping on continuously among the most corrupt in the rankings as indicated below.

Table 1: Corruption Perception Index of Nigeria 1996-2017

Year	Perception Index	No. of Countries Selected	Rating
1996	1.2	54	54
1997	1.3	52	52
1998	1.9	85	81
1999	1.9	99	98
2000	1.9	90	90
2001	1.6	102	100
2002	1.7	91	90
2003	1.4	133	132
2004	1.6	145	144
2005	1.9	158	154
2006	2.2	160	142
2007	2.2	183	127
2008	2.2	183	127
2009	2.7	180	130
2010	2.7	174	134
2011	2.4	183	143
2012	2.7	174	139
2013	2.5	175	144
2014	2.7	176	136
2015	2.6	167	136
2016	2.1	176	136

Source: (Transparency International, 2017).

The above table indicates that Nigeria’s corruption profile keeps on raising internationally since 1996 although, it was falling down recently, still the country falls among the zone of the most corrupt in the ranking for many years.

Taking the second method of analysis, a report disclosed that, fifty (50) top government officials and private businessmen allegedly diverted about \$7.5 billion (N1.35 trillion) between 2006 and 2013. This is according to Itse Sagay the Presidential adviser on legal matters in a conference in State House in March 2017. This period excluded

2014 and 2015 where embezzlement of the highest order unprecedented in the history of the country took place particularly during the 2015 General Elections.

In the same vein, another report jointly by Transparency International in 2017 and Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) disclosed that the former Nigerian Army Chiefs including Navy, Land and Air force looted \$15 billion (N5, 444, 183, 780, 011.50 trillion) through fraudulent arms procurement deals. This is just one sector of governance what about all other governing sectors if investigated properly? Of course it will multiply in trillions and billions of dollars.

In addition and to corroborate the above reports, another report by Chatham House in British revealed that, at least \$480 billion (N173, 915, 225, 875, 776.00 trillion) was stolen from the Nigerian State at least from political independence in 1960 to date by ruling class. A similar report earlier in 2015 by African Union indicating that about N6.87 trillion was stolen in Nigeria from the date of political independence to date. In a recent study conducted jointly by National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria in conjunction with European Union and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and which was reported on August 2017 disclosed that 95 % of Nigerians are corrupt and were engaged in one corrupt practices or the other from 2016 to 2017 during the period of the study. The report further revealed that a sum of N400 billion (\$1, 105, 792, 754.64 billion) was given in bribe to public officials from 2015 to 2016.

The above manifestations are just some sample of the real manifestations of corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria. In electoral process, vote buying and bribery are visible in Nigerian context. In the 2015 General Elections, a sum of \$2.1 billion (N777, 133,624,337, 580.00 billion) which was earmarked for procurement of weapons to fight Boko Haram insurgency was diverted by the then ruling PDP for its campaign finances in which latest revelation disclosed how electoral officials, politicians from opposition, security personnel and electorates were bribed and bought for electoral success by the PDP at all cost.

Impact of Corruption on Electoral Process in Nigeria

Electoral corruption has many negative impacts on Nigerian politics and governance. It leads to violence, ballot stuffing, ballot boxes snatching, alteration of elections results, rigging, intimidation, people are maimed and killed during elections and losers outwit the winners and imposed themselves on the electorates (Micheal, 2013) and candidates are imposed on the electorates by the ruling elites or power brokers as against their wish (Abdulganiyyu, 2014). The rigging of electoral process and corruption led to post election violence as in the case of 2011 General Elections where post elections violence erupted particularly in Northern Nigeria.

Corruption or electoral corruption led to massive looting of billions of dollars or trillions of Naira from public office holders for instance, it is discovered that a whopping sum of \$ 2.1 billion ((N777, 133,624,337, 580.00 billion) was diverted by PDP ruling government in 2015 during elections which was initially meant for procurement of weapons to fight Boko Haram insurgency (EFCC, 2017). The resultant effect was a massive destruction of lives and properties in many parts of Northern Nigeria by the Boko Haram insurgency. Electoral corruption did not only led to stuffing of ballot boxes, stealing of ballot boxes, alteration of results, underage and multiple voting, intimidation of voters and harassment of opposition but, also it leads to manipulation and delay of election tribunal verdicts and blockage of justice in all segments of the society (Olarinmoye, 2008).

Corruption in the electoral process succeeded in obliterating the integrity of security agency in Nigeria as Police sector that is supposed to provide security of lives and properties are found on many occasions to be accomplice in rigging of elections and other dubious acts that rendered electoral process faulty (Idowu, 2010). The most damaging effect of corruption in the electoral process however, is, most Nigerians despaired in the entire system and lost confidence in democratic governance and its dividend (Eke, 2016).

Overview of the 2015 General Election

The 2015 General Elections is a great departure and a watershed in the history of Nigerian democracy for many reasons. Nigeria in its history witnessed four republics; First Republic 1960-1966, Second Republic 1979-1984, Aborted Third Republic 1990-1999 and Fourth Republic 1999 to date. In all the above Republics, it was the first time in 2015 that an incumbent political party was unseated from power by an opposition.

In the 2015 Presidential Election, 14 (fourteen) political parties contested for the post of Presidency, less votes were cast in 2015 than in 2011 by 25 %, the incumbent lost to the opposition by 45 % to 54 %, the opposition won more States 21 out of 36 (CPPA, 2015). The total number of registered voters was sixty seven million and four hundred and twenty two thousand and five (67, 422, 005 million), only thirty one million and seven hundred and forty six and four hundred and ninety (31, 740, 490 million) were accredited for 2015 Presidential elections. Twenty nine million and four hundred and thirty two and eighty three (29, 432, 083 million) of the votes were casted with 97 % of the votes valid. The 2015 General Elections and the outcome were entirely different from the previous elections in Nigeria in many different ways (CPPA, 2015).

The results of the Gubernatorial elections held on 12 April 2015 indicated that the newly ruling party APC won 19 out of 31 making a total of 61.29 % of the states while the newly opposition PDP won 12 or 38.71% of the seats. There was already a state controlled by APGA Anambra and Osun controlled by APC, Ondo Labour Party, Edo APC and

Bayelsa PDP which made a total of 36 states if added together. In total, APC controlled 21 states (58.33%), PDP have 13 seats (36.11 %) with APGA and Labour Party each controlling 1 state (2.78%) (INEC, 2017).

In the National Assembly Elections which was held the same day with Presidential Elections on 28th March, 2017 involving the Senate and Federal House of Representatives, the APC won most of the seats in the upper chamber with 55.05 % and the lower chamber with 62.5 % which enabled the APC to form the leadership of both the houses thereby replacing the PDP from its strong hold majority leadership of 16 years rule (INEC, 2017).

There were many factors and issues that made the 2015 General Elections unique and special in democratisation process in Nigeria. First of all, it was the most challenging elections in the history of the country owing to Boko Haram threat of insecurity (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2015). There was a more subtle and less antagonistic campaign processes as compared to the previous elections in addition to the surfacing of issue-based campaigns on matters such as corruption, poverty, insecurity, poor economy and unemployment (Ayanda & Odunayo, 2015). The freedom of speech is more guaranteed and advanced in the 2015 General Elections which made the contestants and their supporters to have a free space for selling their parties and campaign promises (Chukwudi, 2015).

The 2015 General Elections was reported to have been free, fair and credible with a better civil liberties in terms of freedom of speech, campaign for opposition and other issues than the previous ones (IRI, 2015). The merger of major opposition parties including ACN, ANPP, faction of APGA, CPC and newPDP led to the formation of a strong opposition APC unprecedented in the history of the country with all the wire withal of challenging the ruling PDP at all levels (Omilusi, 2015). It was the first time that such a strong coalition of parties succeeds in the country as opposition.

The electoral body Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had an improvement and was credited for the credibility of the 2015 General Elections as it succeeded in introducing many changes particularly the used of smart card readers for accreditation of voters and voting process. In essence, the voting was transformed electronically and that curbed rigging of elections drastically (Orji, 2015). The above issues and factors were the major indicators that made the 2015 General Elections credible, improved and an entirely different from the previous elections in the history of the country.

1.4 Materials and Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The paper is a research work conducted using field studies specifically qualitative method of data collection and analysis. It is a case study of 2015 General Elections where data was collected from Nigeria from categories classified as follows: category A politicians; category B party stakeholders, category C INEC senior officials, category D EFCC senior officials, category E Academicians and Category F Focus Group Discussion. They were identified and interviewed as informants based on their possession of information relevant to the subject of study. The primary data was supplemented with the existing literature on the field of study which provided the contribution gap for this paper as this subject of analysis was given less attention by scholars particularly the 2015 General Elections.

The information obtained from the informants in the field was codified using some percentages and tabulation where it was supplemented with the existing literature to form a position and conclusion in the work. It should be noted that, the research was carried out without any sponsorship from either the employer of the author or any agency. It was a collective personal effort from the authors and the family of the corresponding author.

1.5 Findings and Discussion : 2015 General Election and Corruption

This section discussed critically, analytically and thematically the findings from the research and interpretations as presented below. The research came across the following findings. It was discovered that, corruption took place in the electoral process in four major areas or specifically involving four major institutions and groups.

Politicians and their supporting bureaucrats

The study discovered that politicians and bureaucrats dipped their hands deeply into the public treasury and stole billions of dollars translating into trillions of Naira for their 2015 campaign finances most especially from the two major contending parties; APC and PDP but, particularly the then ruling PDP. A good example of that is the \$2.1 billion dollars (N777, 133,624,337, 580.00 billion) initially provided for purchase of weapons in order to fight the Boko Haram insurgency. It was directly diverted from that statutory function and distributed into the private pockets of politicians, bureaucrats including serving Army Chiefs, INEC officials, traditional rulers, religious clerics, voters and virtually all and sundry that are involved in election process in the country including influential power brokers (EFCC, 2017).

The arms deal took place through Retired Colonel Sambo Dasuki who was the National Security Adviser to former President Goodluck Jonathan. The money was allocated through his office and later siphoned towards electioneering campaign of the then ruling PDP. A committee of investigation inaugurated by President Muhammadu Buhari discovered how the money was shared among the identified groups above. The EFCC is currently investigating them and more revelations are coming from the deal.

INEC officials

A report in 2017 indicated that many INEC staff in all the six geo-political zones were bribed during the electoral process in order to twist the elections results in favour of the then ruling PDP where about N 23 billion (\$63, 822, 813.191 million) was allegedly distributed to the selected INEC officials by the former Minister of Petroleum Mrs. Diezani Allison Maduekwe (EFCC, 2017 & INEC, 2017).

The electoral body; INEC confirmed that it received allegations against some of its staff for electoral misconduct including bribery during the elections and it asked the EFCC to investigate. The preliminary results of the investigation revealed that many of them were culprits and some were already dismissed while about 223 of the INEC staff were placed on half salary pending the outcome of the final investigation before appropriate measures are taken on them (INEC, 2017). The investigation also disclosed that, the money was distributed to the INEC officials in all the six geo-political zones in the 36 states of the Federation.

Voters

Vote buying is a normal norm in Nigerian politics and is done openly without any iota of doubt or fear by the politicians and their front men. In the case of 2015 General Elections, votes were openly bid by politicians from the proceeds of corruption and indeed, the process of vote buying itself is a corrupt practice. One of the informants consulted in this work for instance revealed that, he saw nakedly the case of PDP bidding votes for N 500 (\$ 1.3) but when they sensed danger of losing they raised the amount to N 1000 (\$ 2.8). The electorates were just required to vote for them, snap the ballot paper with their smart phones, present it to them and get their share of spoils.

This issue of vote buying has been witnessed severally in Nigerian politics as a result of extreme poverty, hunger, deprivation, illiteracy and political culture of money politics. Many international observers reported such cases across the country during elections since 1999. Apart from vote buying, electorates were sponsored by politicians through giving them meager amount of money to engage in criminal activities during elections such as ballot stuffing, ballot boxes stealing, intimidation of voters and opposition and political thuggery.

Spending above maximum financial limit during campaign

Another area where corruption manifested during the 2015 General Elections is the campaign spending. There is a constitutional provision by the 2010 Electoral Act as amended on the maximum amount that each contestant for a specific political office can spend and failure to adhere strictly to the provision will lead to sanction. But, this work discovered that politicians from both APC and PDP spent above without any sanction.

A joint report by USAID and UKAID disclosed that, both APC and PDP used public treasury in sponsoring their campaigns at all levels and they have spent above limit. For instance, the 2010 Electoral Act specifies the following as maximum spending limit for elective offices.

Table 2: Showing spending limits of candidates according to 2010 Electoral Act

Position	Spending Limit
Presidential Candidate	N1Billion (\$3, 183, 870.91)
Governorship Candidate	N200Million(\$636, 774.18)
Senatorial Candidate	N40Million (\$127, 354.84)
Member Federal House of Representatives	N20Million (\$63, 677.42)
State House of Assembly Members	N10Million (\$31, 838.71)
L G Chairmanship Candidate	N10Million (\$31, 838.71)
L G Councillorship Elections	N1, 000,000 (\$3, 183.871)

Source: (Federal Republic of Nigeria, Electoral Act 2010 as Amended. The conversion into USD was made by the researcher).

The above table while identifies clearly the maximum limit that each contestant of a given political office should spend at maximum, the USAID/UKAID report indicated that, the Presidential candidates alone for PDP and APC spent in media campaign alone talk less of other campaign finances above their maximum financial spending. The table below revealed the assertion above.

Table 3: Media Spending of two Major Political Parties in the 2015 General Elections: APC and PDP

	PDP Presidential Candidate	APC Presidential candidate
Campaign Expenses		
Campaigns and Rallies	1, 280, 374, 870.00	671, 062, 200.00
Expenses on Billboards	473, 160, 000.00	190, 380, 000.00
Electronic Media Campaign	532, 100, 000.00	410, 050, 000.00
Electronic Media advert	3, 988, 822, 125.00	1, 064, 706, 805.00
Print Media Campaign	2, 475, 228, 301.00	5 79, 647, 687.00
TOTAL	8, 749, 685, 296.00	2, 915, 846, 737.00

Source: (USAID & UKAID, 2015).

1.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded from this work that, massive corruption took place during the 2015 General Elections from both the ruling PDP and the opposition APC using the public treasury for their campaign sponsorship and other political activities corrupting many segments of the society in the process including politicians, electoral body officials, voters and other stakeholders in the national polity. The study concludes that, the elections is fair and credible compared to the previous ones despite the massive corruption that took place because the highest bidder lost and the electoral body introduced some positive changes that curbed rigging drastically. The incumbent resorted to crazy disbursement of money to win since the usual manipulation of the process seemed impossible and that explains why such huge amount of money was spent in an unprecedented fashion in the history of elections in the country.

The study thus, recommends the following:

1. The electoral body INEC should be empowered and made more financially and constitutionally independent to checkmate excessive financial spending of parties and candidates and sanction the offenders appropriately;
2. Civil societies should embark on massive civic awareness towards electorates on the dangers of corruption in electoral process and its impacts on their future;
3. The anti-graft body EFCC should be involved in electoral process for screening of candidates who want to contest for an electoral office to ensure his integrity and incorruptibility;
4. The spending limit stipulated by 2010 Electoral Act should be reviewed upward as the currently inflationary trend and the nature of money politics in Nigeria made the current limit not feasible and
5. All the offenders that are caught in the corruption act during the 2015 General Elections including politicians, INEC officials, bureaucrats and others should be punished severely to deter others in future from doing the same.

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