



E-ISSN: 2706-8927
P-ISSN: 2706-8919
IJAAS 2019; 1(2): 146-152
Received: 13-08-2019
Accepted: 17-09-2019

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Money politics, vote buying and selling in Nigeria: An emerging threat to good governance

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Abstract

Before now, Nigeria electoral processes was characterized with rigging devices such as ballot box snuffing and snatching, outright manipulation of election results as well as electoral violence which were a major bane of electoral process in Nigeria. But, in recent time, money politics, vote buying and selling have taken the central stage in our political and electoral activities. This ugly trend has become subject of discussion and natural embarrassment due to the inability of political parties to organize their political activities in a decent manner especially during political electioneering campaigns. Parties and their candidates have demonstrated that good manifestoes, acceptability and integrity of those viewing for public offices no longer convincing enough to guarantee electoral victory thus, resulting to vote-buying. On the other side, the willingness of the voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder is another emerging face of commercialization of electoral processes in Nigeria. This disturbing trend or practice constitutes a blemish on the electoral process in Nigeria. If unchecked, it portends danger of collapsing of our democratization process and in turn prevent electorates from reaping the dividend of democracy. This paper therefore, examines the implications of such unacceptable behaviors and practice in Nigeria. The nexus between poverty and political participation is also examine by the papers. The paper applied qualitative method of data collection through the use of secondary sources of data, with specific reference(s) to the Ekiti and Osun State Gubernatorial elections conducted in 2018. The paper concludes with some recommendations among others that can reduce the growing trend of monetization of politics in Nigeria.

Keywords: Vote buying/selling, commercialization, threat, Nigeria, politics, governance

Introduction

In Nigeria, money politics, vote buying and selling have been topics of interest to many writers and scholars both within and outside the country due to the devastating effects of this ugly trend on the body polity. Scholars such as have written on money politic, vote and buying and selling and its attendants problems ^[1, 2, 3]. The Nigeria fourth Republic has witnessed high degree of political turmoil due to irregularities in the conduct of her election and this is evident in the subsequent nullification of election results by election petition tribunals across the nation.

Throughout the world, democracy is adjudged to be the best form of government but it is being constantly assaulted in Nigeria due to the phenomenon of money politics, vote buying and selling. Money seems to have taken the center stage in the political process of many countries and in Nigeria politics, to the extent that word, “money politics” with a pejorative connotation have crept into the country’s political lexicon. The problem with this situation is that the electoral process is often compromise resulting in elections not being free and fair ^[1, 4].

Vote buying and selling in its literal meaning is a form of economic exchange where political parties, its candidates or their agents purchase, and the voters “sell” votes as they buy and sell commodities. While corruption is a universal phenomenon, it would appear to have become problematic in Nigeria, prevalent among both the leaders and the followers. The canker worm of corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria’s development and ways of doing things ^[5, 6].

It is important to note that it is not in any way being suggested that the use of money by political parties or group of person in politics inherent corruptive influence. The truth is that money is needed to provide logistics such as mobilization of party faithfuls for political rallies and campaigns, production of party emblems and other symbols, house-to-house campaign, wall-to-wall advertisements, printing of posters and manifestoes etc.

The only worry, however, is the noticeable corruption influence of money politics, vote buying and selling and their negative effects on good governance in Nigeria.

Theoretical frame work

For the purpose of this paper, Reciprocal determinism theory was applied as a theory for analysis. The central theme of the theory is that there is a connection between environment and behaviour, whereby the environment influence human behaviour^[7].

The theory explains that external consequences are not the sole or independent determinant of human behaviour. That people play a dialectical role in being actively involved in the creation of society and reacting to environmental stimulus. This explains that all human accomplishments result from “reciprocal interaction of external circumstance with a host of personal determinants including endowed potentialities, acquired competences, reflective thought, and a high level of self-initiative. Reciprocal determinism is suited for this paper because it presupposes that environment factors drive voter’s behaviour.

Conceptual clarification

Vote buying and selling can be defined as the phenomenon in Nigeria electoral process whereby political parties, their candidates or agents seek to buy the vote of an electorate in an upcoming election. Vote buying and selling can take various forms such as a monetary exchange, as well as an exchange for necessary goods and services. This practice is often used to incentivize or persuade voters to turn out on elections and vote in a particular way. According to Fredrick Charles and Andrea’s Schedler^[8] candidates “buy and electorates ‘sell vote, as they buy and sell yams, meats or books”. The act of vote-buying by this view is a contract or an auction in which voters sell their votes to the highest bidder. Political parties and their candidates buy vote by offering items of material benefits to voters candidates may generally aspire to purchase political support at the ballot box in accordance with the idea of market exchange.

Vote buying and selling may carry different meaning in different Cultural context. According to Ojo^[5], vote-buying as a phenomenon is neither system specific nor space bound. In all societies, whether developed or developing, medieval or contemporary, vote buying and selling occurs in all regions and climes. The only difference is that it differs in extent manifestation from one country to the other. Regions where episodic and electorate-related gift giving or favour rendering is common include Benin Republic, Japan, Northern Portugal and Taiwan (Ojo iid).

Vote buying and selling and other forms of electoral malpractices affect democratic institutions adversely and erode trust in democracies^[9]. In Nigeria and other developing democracies, vote buying and selling corrupt electoral process and hinder policy accountability^[10]. Because of the manner policy makers were elected, vote buying erodes the accountability that should be derived from democratic election.

The connection between vote buying and selling and threat to democracy can be observed in the policy outcomes from the source, because policies emanate from an adverse selection of unsuitable politicians with lower quantities who are the products of vote buying and selling^[11].

An overview of money politics, vote buying and selling in Nigeria

The history of politics in Nigeria especially after the first Republic is replete with money–bag politics. During the first Republic, political parties are regionally based. Their weapons used to ensure victories was to appeal to ethnic and religious sentiments, deployed political leaders and tribal heroes/heroine. This was possible because the popularity, acceptability and strength of the major political parties and their allies were essentially enhanced by the primordial ties they had with the people in their regions. The parliamentary system that being practiced then, also made it possible for the parties to exercise considerable controls over the candidates to be fielded for election.

Dudley^[12] observed that:

Candidates in the election were less importance as the parties took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity played alliance politics and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raise.

The influence of money was very minimal in the first Republic between 1960-1966. Though, politicians were known to distribute items such as T-Shirts, caps and badges with party emblems and other sundry items, to their supporters and voters during political rallies and campaign, there was no huge spending by individual candidates to win elections as currently being obtained in political activities and electioneering of candidates.

The phenomenon of money politics, vote buying and selling took another dimensions during the second republic which started in 1979. This, can be explained, by the participation of some wealthy Nigerians who made their money during the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. Most of these wealthy Nigerians were contractors who probably supplied arms and ammunitions to both parties and government contractors reconstructing infrastructure destroyed during the war. Davies^[1], Summarised the situation as follows; There was so much display of affluence and the use of money by the wealthy contractors and the mercantile class that those who emerged victorious in the convections and the primaries of some of the political parties, notably the National party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People’s Party (NNP) and the Unity party of Nigeria (UPN) belong to the business-managerial group.

The situation of money politics, vote buying and selling was even worse in 1993 as the phenomenon took very firm roots in the political activities of contestants. This was because the political campaign for the conduct of the 1993 general elections demonstrated excessive use of money during the party primaries and Presidential elections, despite the fact that election was conducted under the watchful eyes of the military. Nwosu^[13] stated that candidates who lost out in the election 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 others and how votes will be allocated to aspirants.

In the same vein, money politics and vote buying and selling reached their pinnacles in the election that ushered in the current democratically elected government in 1999 and the Civilian-Civilian transition elections of 2003, 2007, 2011 are 2015. A political scientist observed that, “if the use of

money in the election was open and shameless, that of 2003 was outrageously indecent^[14]. The former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who was a direct beneficiary of these highly manipulated elections, belatedly admitted that:

With so much resources being deployed to capture elective officers. It is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money and materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development^[14].

Money politics, vote buying and selling assumed a frightening dimension at the Presidential Primary of the people Democratic Party (PDP) held at Port Harcourt in 2018, where some Presidential aspirants were reported to have bribed many of the delegated with dollars. According to Sahara reporter^[15], many of the more than 3,000 delegates were said to have received thousands of dollars as bribes from some presidential aspirants ranging from \$2,500 to \$9,000 each in exchange for votes. In a country where there is abject poverty and people live below \$2,000 daily, \$9,000 is a huge amount of money when converted to local currency. It suffices to note that, the current probe into the office of the immediate past National Security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki in 2015 by current Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, is a good example of how politicians spend huge amount of money on elections issues. Money meant for the purchase of arms and ammunition to assist Nigerian Soldiers fighting Boko Haram Insurgency were allegedly diverted into the private pockets of members of the People Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2015 Presidential election. Raymond Dokpesi, the founder of DAAR Communication Plc and Ray Power FM was implicated in the crime admitted that the sum of N2.1 billion was collected by him from the office of NSA for the purpose of publicity /advertisement his organization did for People Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2015 Presidential election. Also, Attahiru Bafarawa, the former Governors of Sokoto State was implicated in the crime admitted that the sum of 2 billion was collected from the office of NSA by him for "spiritual assistance" for People Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2015 Presidential election. The phenomenon of money politics, vote buying and selling is not limited to electorates alone; it has penetrated every facets of our electoral process and had also destroyed our Judicial Institution. The Scenerio in Osun State between Olagunsoye Oyinlola and Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola in 2008-2010 is one of the best examples of how money politics, vote buying and selling syndrome have destroyed our democratic society. In a country where money plays an important role in our electoral processes and money politics is very high, the opposite political parties and candidates are in disadvantages position before the election. Politicians who lost out in an election easily lose patronage and followership. It is obvious from the analysis so far, that the use of money in Nigerian politics, vote buying and selling have negative effects on our democratic development and electoral process. The general polity is characterized by this reckless and shameless use of money to buy vote and even conscience. The politicians are ready to channel their

financial and material resources to secure electoral victory at the poll or at the tribunals, in no different ways.

Why money politics, vote buying and selling?

So many reasons can be attributed as being responsible for the incidence of many politics, vote buying and selling in Nigeria. Some of these factors include, ignorance on the part of the electorates, voters apathy, inadequate information, poverty, lack of awareness and poor sensitization, and deceit by the politicians. There is also altitudinal problem on the part of the "buyer" of vote and "seller" of vote. our altitude towards politics where most politicians view it as an investment from which huge profit is expected and not a call to serve humanity, is wrong. The electorates, on their part see politics especially during election, as a golden opportunity to sell their votes to represent their own share of the national cake since they do not have access to where the cake is being shared^[4].

Davies^[1], identified other factors as follows

- A. The inability of many political parties and the contestants to put in place comprehensive and comprehensible manifestoes for scrutiny by voters, instead of clear-cut manifestoes that would enable the electorate to make a rational political choice, meaningless slogans, demagogic and rabblerousing Speeches are made. Such speeches either overestimate the political perception of the voters, but are rarely educative and convincing. Many voters seem to be unimpressed by all the tricks the parties and the candidates employ, hence the need to bribe them for their votes.
- B. Political cynicism on the part of the voters who believe that political office holder, are incurably corrupt, self-seeking and incompetent, that politics is a dirty and dishonourable enterprise, that the whole political process is a fraud and a betrayal of the public trust. This cynical view of politics is further accentuated by unfulfilled promises made by winners of past elections. Thus, asking for a pay-off, another way by which the people receive their own share of the national cake. On the other hand, the candidate who gave money to voters probably believe that they are investing against electoral failure.
- C. Focusing on personalities rather than on issues. By the mode of their campaigns, most candidates draw the attention of the electorates away from the political parties to themselves. The consequence of this is that the political parties and their message become less important to the electorate. The candidates then take the centre stage and would there need to spend more money than their parties could afford in order to mobilize support for themselves.
- D. The peoples' perception greatly reinforced by obscene display of opulence by public office holder and ostentation living of many politicians that every elected or appointed public officer is amassing wealth from the public treasury. This seems to have strengthened the resolve of many voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder.
- E. The penchant of politicians to strive to win elections, even at the party primary level, at all cost, makes desperate contestants to engage in all sort of malpractices including offering.

- F. Financial and material inducement of voters. Working on the poverty of the people, Nigerian Politician have been known to distribution food and sometimes on Election Day, contrary to the provision of the extent electoral law that prohibits such practice. Instances abound too, when candidates threw some money into the air during campaign rallies, making people to scramble for it and getting injured in the process.
- G. The noticeable weakness in a party whip, characteristics of party policies in presidential system, when elected members exercise considerable degree of freedom when voting on legislative proposals. Such freedom makes the legislators to be more susceptible to receive gratifications from the private interest groups. The interest groups employ what shank calls legalized bribery. They make large donations to some spurious private or community programmes in which the target legislators are interested, and give expensive gifts to the legislators or sponsor their overseas travel etc. all in the name of public relations to secure the votes of the legislators in the legislature.

The absence of any legislation that puts any ceiling on financial contributions to political parties and candidates by groups of individual ^[1].

The above reasons are mainly responsible for the increasing levels of money politics, vote buying and selling in Nigeria. The resolved by voters to sell their votes to the highest bidder jeopardize the provision of dividend of democracy to the people by politicians because that act of vote selling and buying will continue to grant those who have accumulated wealth but nothing to offer the electorates to continue to thrive over the credible ones with financial constraints. However, it must be quickly add that the Nigerian Constitution is not completely silent on party finances but its provision in respect of the finance of political parties relate only to their source of funds and others assets⁴. For example, Section 225 (3) of the 1999 constitution merely prohibits any political party to (a) retain any funds or assets remitted or sent to it from outside Nigeria. The requirement that political parties prepare and submit audited account to the electoral body is only intended to ensure transparency and accountability.

Several provisions of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended): Section 124, 126, 129 and 130, criminalized bribery and corruption relating to voting during elections were not being enforced by the electoral umpire or security agencies. The good news however, is that the Nigerian National Assembly in the Electoral Act, 2018 (as amended), set campaign spending limits for presidential election at N5 billion, governorship at N1 billion while Senatorial and House of Representatives election were put at N500 million and N250 million respectively. Others limit set by the National Assembly are aspirants for State assembly, local government chairmanship and councilor pegged at N50 million, N30 million and N15 million respectively. The two chambers also set a N10 million limit for donations by individuals and organizations to political parties. With these amendments, maybe money politics, vote buying and selling in our politics will be reduced to barest minimum.

Money politics, vote buying and selling an emerging threat to democracy

It is not an overstatement to say challenges posed by money

politics, vote buying and selling are numerous. One of such challenges is the fact that when politicians of questionable characters are put in the position of power, there will be incompatible mixture. The act of vote buying and selling affects democratic institutions adversely and erode trust in democracies as well as sending wrong signal in the value and nature of our leaders.

Effective and efficient governance are based on the tenets and practice of democracy. A legitimate government must be the one that enjoys the trust and support of the majority of the people. Legitimacy engenders trust and support of the people to government policies and reform agenda. Sadly, money politics, vote buying and selling erode this very important attribute of democratic government. This is because, the people believed that those who rule them must do so on the basic of popular consent, freely expressed as the tonic required to make the people make material sacrifice that reform agenda, social, political or economic inevitably demand. The fact is that, without legitimacy, there is not trust, and without trust there can be no genuine political support.

Asobie ^[16], has this to say on the diabolical role that money played in the presidential election conducted in April 2007 by the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its legitimacy status. The set of elections conducted in April 2007 by the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which purportedly produced legislators, at both the state and national levels and Governors/Deputy Governors and president/vice respectively, has created problem of political legitimacy. That problem is yet to be addressed. From the look of things, the electoral tribunals cannot resolve it. It is also unlikely that the ruling class in Nigeria will be minded to find a lasting solution to it. It is the Nigerian people in their non-government capacities that seem to have the solution to this political underdevelopment ^[20]. According to Milbrath ^[17], people of integrity and those who genuinely want to serve the people but have no money to buy votes may lose out in the contest, while candidates with bad reputation but with strong financial resources or those with corrupt tendencies may get elected. When this happens, the immoral and despicable use of money to buy votes is then celebrated as a good effective weapon in electoral battles by successful contestants.

Money politics, vote buying and selling have also made election results to have little or nothing to do with the performance of politician in office. Simply because performance is not a justify factor in an electoral outcome, the incentive to perform is very week. And because vote-buying and selling is very effective in achieving electoral victory the resort to it is very high. In view of this, politician spent huge amount of money to secure victory at polls who usually have a greater interest to pursue their personal and private business and financial interest of their sponsors. Another threat of money politics, vote buying and selling to democracy is that the winner in the elections when he occupies public office that gives him access to public fund become more prone to corruption. The popular belief among few of Nigerian politician, that political contest is a very high risk investment with greater returns. This kind of thinking has been supported by a former president of the Nigeria senate when he confirmed in an interview that because votes are not free, politician considered electoral contest for sent in the National Assembly as an investment

and that many of them invest their fortunes, incurred debts and even sold their houses to contest and get elected^[18].

It is important to know, that this kind of unwholesome practice constitutes serious hindrance on public policy, legislative process and other important segment which consequently bring the highest indignity to the democratic and electoral process.

Assessment of the ekiti and osun election

Unlike the previous Republics were appeal to ethnic and religious, sentiments were employed by political leaders to gain electoral victories, the phenomenon of money politics, vote buying and selling has become pronounced in the politics of Nigeria's fourth Republic. The blatant purchase and sell of vote by politicians and electorates respectively have eroded relevance people attached to election and political parties.

Dudley^[12], in his reference to the first, second and to a large extent, the Third Republic, correctly observed as follows: Candidates in the elections were less importunate as the party took the centre stage, appealed to ethnicity, played alliance politics, and used highly emotive terms which in most cases invited people to violence. Most of the election expenses were borne by the parties from the funds they were able to raise^[12].

Following the outcome of the recently conducted governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states, indications are strong that many Nigerians and the international community are fast losing faith in the nation's democracy and that the conduct of those elections could not be recommended as a template for the forthcoming 2019 general election as it fell short of global standards.

The Ekiti State Governorship Election of Saturday 14th July, 2018 brought the phenomenon of financial inducement (vote buying and selling) to the fore most than ever before. The election was held against the background of massive deployment of security agencies to the state, citing security as a concern. However, the atmosphere surrounding the election was largely peaceful and devoid of any major acts of violence, which was a major concern for several citizens of Ekiti State and election observers, owing to what happened in the last election gubernatorial election held in the state in 2014.

New initiative for social development (NISD), center for social justice, Good Health and Community Development (CENSJHOD) and International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), a non-governmental organizations in their post -election statement on the Ekiti election as reported by The nation newspaper of July, 18, 2018 state that... "Although there were incidences of vote-buying, all parties induced in one way or the other. Some parties did "prepaid", others did "see and buy" while we had parties that shared electronics before the election. Many of those who cast their votes were willing to be bought. Some even waited at the polling units waiting for the highest bidder, and all parties were culpable of this.

Also, coalition of Domestic and International election observers accredited to observe the July 14, governorship election poll in Ekiti state reported that "The election fell short of global practices and the electoral standard" The reports goes further to state that "the conduct of some of the security operatives and unwholesome practices of vote buying – where voters surreptitiously showed which party they voted to party agents who went behind to settle them

largely marred the electoral process. The observers, therefore, held that the July 14 poll could not be recommended as a template for the forthcoming 2019 general election as it fell short of global standards and spelt doom"^[19].

In Ekiti state, it appeared that the People Democratic Party (PDP) was not sure of her chance, the party came out with all sorts of tactics to hoodwink the people of the state including PDP supporters and faithful queuing up in Ekiti government house and other public places to receive handouts to vote for PDP candidates^[20]. This actions of Ekiti state Government triggered the scramble for votes by other political parties in the contest, taking the financial inducement of the electorates to a worrisome dimension.

In Osun state, the election was seen by many public analyst, social commentators and observers as a defying moment for the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC), owing to issue of 9 months salaries arrears owned workers of the state, which had been turned to an instrument of political campaign by the opposition People Democratic Party (PDP).

The transition Monitoring Group (TMG)^[21], a non - governmental organization in its post -election statement on the Osun Election reported that complaints about allegation of inducement of votes by political parties and their agent on the basis of "vote for cash/cash for vote and "see and buy" to influence who they voted for. The report goes further to state that "the organization received reports of distribution of money, food items and gifts by politician at Boripe, Atakumosa East, Atakumosa West, Ife North, Ife South, Obokun, Ede North, Egbedore, Bolorunduro, Ila, Irepodun, Iwo Local Government Areas of the State. These ugly trends are dangerous recipe against the credibility of the electoral process. The rampant case of voters inducement does not portray the electoral process in good lights as its creates serious questions on the integrity of the process and legitimacy of it outcome".

A social commentator, Ogunbiyi^[22] also reported on the Osun Election as follows: In the September 22nd Osun State Gubernatorial election, the trend of vote buying and selling took a more bothersome dimension. Since INEC barred the use of mobile phone and other such devices that could facilitate vote buying and selling, politicians swiftly came up with other fool proof methods. Thus, vote buying transaction were wrapped up on days preceding the election. Marketers were sent out to canvas for votes at reasonable prices while names and other relevant details of interested voters (sellers) were carefully taken and compiled. To really ensure that the process is given an extraterrestrial clout, in some cases, oaths, were sworn before a deal is struck. Amounts involved ranged from N5000 to N10,000.c

Similarly, Ketil Karlsen, Head of European Union and the Economic community of West African states' delegation to Nigeria on election in her interview with Punch Newspaper^[19] on the Osun State Gubernatorial election averred that, "vote buying is undermining democracy. Having a kind of 'who is the highest' bidder approach to politics will not bring Nigeria any good. It will not lead to a stronger reflection of the will of the people and it will not lead to solutions, for a vast majority of Nigerians because they would not enjoy the right dividends of democracy. If you sell your vote and let other people buy your vote you sell a piece of yourself. You sell your own integrity; you sell your own independence and influence, and really not bring Nigeria any good. that should not be up for sale.

The way forward /recommendations

Vote buying and selling is an electoral fraud; it is an electoral malpractice and is an illegal interference with the process of our election. No doubt, money politics, vote buying and selling are threat to democratic governance in Nigeria. It is quite doubtful if money politics, vote buying and selling can be totally eradicated in Nigeria. However, there should be at least some mechanisms by which it negative consequences on Nigeria's democracy can be minimized.

Electoral offences commission should be established with an authority to investigate and prosecute breaches of laws governing elections including vote buying and selling. The body will be critical to combating electoral malpractices. More transparent and effective screening methods must be developed by the political parties and the electoral body, to ensure the exclusion of politician with overt or covert tendency to corrupt the electoral process and the electorates. Mass media has a role to play in sensitizing voters to know their primary responsibilities in electing credible candidates. Also, there is need for political education of the electorate to be more guided in their electoral choices, and reduce the pressure put on their elected public officers for financial rewards for voting. The abysmal poverty level of the electorates have been an avenue for exploitation by wealthy politicians. Nigerian economy must be improved upon to empower the people economically so that they can make independent electoral decision devoid of financial consideration.

Several provisions of the Nigeria Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) section 124, 126, 129 and 130 criminalized bribery and corruption relating to voting during elections. Section 130 specifically stated that : "A person who - (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any person to vote or refrain from voting at such election; or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both". These sections of the electoral act must be vigorously enforced by security agencies.

Finally, the campaign spending limits of N5billion for presidential election, N1 billion for governorship, election, N500 million and N250,000 for senatorial and house of representatives election respectively, set by the Nigeria Electoral Act, 2018 (as amended) must be enforced by security agencies as the law is critical to combating vote buying and selling in Nigeria electoral process.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the concept of money politics, vote buying and selling and its threat to democracy. The paper concluded on the note that financial inducement to electorates has become a standard practice in Nigeria. However, if indeed money answers all things, the only thing it will always fail to buy is credibility. The credibility of Nigerian's electoral process has been mired by the role money plays because the use of money with the sole objective of purchasing votes during an election is counterproductive to democracy and good governance. To overcome the phenomenon of money politics, vote buying

and selling therefore, joint efforts of the government and citizens are needed. Nigeria also needs new value system and re-orientation that will safeguard people's commitment and confidence in government. As Andreas Schedler Succinctly put it, "if power and money determines electoral choices constitutional guarantees of democratic freedom and equality turn into dead letter" [23].

Nevertheless, the implementation of the policy options as suggested in the way forward of this paper, can help to reduce the threat of money politics, vote buying and selling to democracy in Nigeria.

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