

Nigeria's Electoral Process: Probing Nefarious Issues and Complications in the Polity

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Abstract

For over two decades, Nigeria's electoral process has been languishing though there have been efforts by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). But those efforts have been thwarted. The continued poor showing and outcome have been sickening and disappointing. However, with a determination and tenacity aimed at probing issues and complications that are responsible for the drawbacks in the process, this paper examines the nefarious issues and their impact on the electoral process. Qualitative approach was adopted and secondary sources were employed with inferences drawn by qualitative analysis. Imperfection in the electoral process have been the result of corruption, electoral malpractices, electoral violence, vote buying and federal might. It offered potential ways seen as drives for improving the electoral process, one of which is the practical independence of INEC as recognized by the Electoral Act, 2010. The paper concludes that the issues and complications are antithetical to Nigeria's electoral process.

Keywords: Electoral system, issues, complications, polity, Nigeria

I. Introduction

Nigeria is a lead country when it comes to politics, deepening democracy and good governance in Africa. This is unconnected to the fact that it is regarded as the most populous black nation in the world. Even at that, whatever obtains in Nigeria's electoral system is more or less a lens showcasing every other democracy in Africa. As sensitive as Nigeria to the rest of Africa and electoral process imperative to any democracy, it remains an object of worry that it hasn't been gotten right, even after two decades of uninterrupted democratic administration. The place of electoral process in any nation is crucial that it serves as the bedrock, baseline and edifice upon which democracy and development are dependent. However, Odusote (2014 p. 25) posited that there is an obvious matrix between democracy and the electoral process.

Aligning with the thought of Odusote, it could be argued that democracy is anchored on a credible electoral system because if there are no elections, we wouldn't have any cause to talk of representatives or political office holders who will exercise the people's power entrusted in them to govern them. A defective electoral system will ultimately give birth to middling and mediocre leaders. The tripartite of democracy, governance and good governance which are barometers through which development is measured in a given society are only ensured when they pilot an unfailing electoral process. Democracy, for instance, refers to a government that owes its ultimate power to the people. That is, the idea that people remain the cornerstone shaping the representatives in government at intervals or through periodic polls. Also, such principles like rule of law, separation of powers, freedom of the press, respect for human rights and active political process, which are condiments for democracy, must be present before it could be seen as genuine.

Governance, on the other hand, depicts the process of decision-making and medium through which decisions are implemented. Good governance could then mean the art and science of making good decisions that are needed for solving envisaged problems. In essence, it encapsulates the organization of human beings, materials and ideational infrastructure in such a way that it improves lives, promotes happiness and decreases pains for the citizens. Johnston (2004) defined good

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governance as a competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs.

However, a foundation for the aforementioned concepts of democracy and good governance is the country's electoral process. Stressing the dysfunctional in Nigeria's electoral process, the Transition Monitoring Group (2005: 13) argued that it is widely believed that at the root cause of corruption, lack of due process, insensitivity and impunity on the part of government functionaries is a deformed or rather an uninformed electoral process. This has been the tradition in Nigeria ever since the 1999 general election which was the first election after returning from the military government. Amazingly, this giant country in Africa is still engulfed and hampered by countless anomalies in her electoral process which is a consequential factor responsible for the emergence of mediocre leaders.

Elections conducted from 1999 to 2019 were marred by anomalies. In the words of Onu (2005 cited in Nnamani 2014), "Elections in Nigeria have continued to recycle in a vicious violence and unmitigated manipulation especially from the political elites". Even the INEC, the body saddled with the responsibility to conduct elections that will be acceptable by all and sundry, is not left out of these menaces. For instance, Kayode Idowu of the editorial review of *The Nation* newspaper opined that with just a few months to the polls of 2007, the INEC led by former Chairman Prof. Maurice Iwu failed to unveil a programme for fair and pluralistic contest by the aspirants (*The Nation*, May 17, 2010).

Almost a decade down the lane, the same level of unpreparedness was exhibited by it that led to the postponement of the 2019 general election by two weeks. Before this, the words of Kayode Idowu reverberated in the words of Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim, Chair of the editorial board of *Premium Times* newspaper "It was particularly unfortunate that the Commission covered up its unpreparedness and deceived Nigerians and indeed the world that it was ready when it was not". He stressed further that INEC also angered all stakeholders by refusing to postpone the polls until just five hours to the elections (*Premium Times*, February 22, 2019).

Owing to this lackadaisical preparation on the part of this institution and the shaky electoral system, one need not be further told that the output of the product (leaders) of the system who found their ways into the corridor of power has not been something different from disappointment. However, these lapses and inconsistencies in the electoral process have had much influence on the society which has been at the receiving end of such leadership because the people have been raped and denied of qualified, endowed and popular personalities who would have transformed the society. Based on the irregularities in the system which has inadvertently led to no tangible transformation in the society, the paper attempts, amongst other things, to examine the nefarious issues and complications confronting the system and comes out with possible ways of improving it.

Objectives of the study

Objectives of the study are to briefly discuss the electoral process, examine the history of the electoral institution, examine the issues and complications in the electoral process, and proffer potential ways of improving it.

Research methodology

Secondary sources were used for data collection. They were library sources like books, journals, magazines, conference papers and other works. The internet was also found helpful for the inquiry. The gathered data were critically analysed which subsequently led to a conclusion.

Significance of the study

The inquiry centres on nefarious issues serving as the malaise in the electoral process and how it could be curtailed to improve and strengthen the electoral process. It will also be of immense value to the existing knowledge, especially in the fields of political, security and developmental studies. It will further be handy for policymakers, stakeholders and scholars eager to see a better electoral process.

Scope of the study

The study covers the elections from 1999 to 2020. The general election of 1999 was taken into consideration because it was the first election conducted in the country after a long period of military rule.

II. Dialogue on Electoral Process

The electoral process is a holistic process that includes earmarking constituencies, registration of voters, identifying political parties to be voted for, voting, counting of votes, declaration of election results and petitions arising from election results entertained at the specialized or dedicated courts or tribunals. Electoral process just like a building plan that showcases the roadmap of the actualization of a building could be said to be the blueprint detailing every process that election has to undergo for its actualization and credibility. Amadu (1989) observed, "The election process begins with the delimitation of constituencies or electoral districts; it progresses through the intervening stages and terminates with the final adjudication of election disputes or petitions at an ordinary court or election tribunals" (p. 7).

However, giving a more encompassing opinion of what the electoral process denotes, Nnamani (2014: 79) argues that it refers to all the pre- and post-election activities without which election is meaningless. He additionally stated that these include the registration of political parties, review of voters' registers, delineation of constituencies, resolution of electoral disputes, return of elected representatives and swearing of elected representatives. Looking at it from another perspective, it is an essential core on which a society rests. For instance, Okwechime (2007: 2) opined that "... the electoral process is the foundation of any civil society". To make the foundation healthy, the enactment of an electoral act that regulates such a process is required.

Electoral Act

It refers to the legal framework that ensures elections are supervised, conducted and managed within the principles stipulated in the laws contained in its framework. Putting differently, the Act refers to the laws that regulate the conduct of every election in the country. Federal, state and local council bodies are to follow the stipulated procedures. Therefore, the pillar upon which the electoral process rests is the Act which is the latest electoral law in the country. Several provisions are stipulated under it, some of which are:

Part I: Establishment and functions of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This section not only recognizes the INEC as the only body saddled with the responsibility of conducting elections in the country but also ensured some degree of independence to it by establishing a special fund for it.

Part II: Staff of the Commission.

Part III: National register of voters and voters' registration.

Part IV: Procedure at election, that is, days of election, postponement of election, announcement of election results, oath of neutrality by election officers, et cetera.

Part V: Power of the Commission to register political parties, election expenses of political parties, limitations broadcasts and campaigns by political parties and others.

Part VI: Procedure for election in area.

- Part VII: Electoral offences relating to registration, nomination, disorderly behaviour at political meetings, etc.
- Part VIII: Determination of election petitions like proceedings to question an election, time for presenting election petition, persons entitled to present election petitions, et cetera.
- Part IX: Miscellaneous matters like secrecy of ballot, inspection of documents, civic education by the Commission, regulations, et cetera.

III. History of Electoral Institutions in Nigeria

Okpeh (2009) rightly observed that between 1954 and 2009, the country had a total of eleven electoral bodies. Nigeria achieved independence from the British Colonial administration on October 1, 1960. However, there had been an electoral commission even before that as there were pre-independence elections. For instance, the 1959 general election though a parliamentary election was conducted on 12 December 1959 by the Electoral Commission of Nigeria headed by British administrator Ronald Wraith. According to the website of INEC, the origin of electoral bodies in Nigeria can be traced to the period before independence, when the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was established to conduct general elections in 1959. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEC), established in 1960, conducted the immediate post-independence federal and regional elections in 1964 and 1965 respectively (www.inecnigeria.org. Retrieved on 2 April 2020).

After independence, some electoral commissions emerged. The first post-independence national election took place in 1964 and the government lasted until 15th January, 1966. However, between 1966 and 1998, there were seven military regimes and two democratic elected administrations. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) was replaced in the early 1990s by the National Electoral Commission (NECOM) which was subsequently replaced in 1998 by the

The military coup of 15th January, 1966 led to the termination of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) headed by Chief Ayo Esua. In 1978, under the regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) under the chairmanship of Chief Michael Ani who was later succeeded by Justice Victor Ovie Whisky, was initiated as the new electoral body. It supervised the elections of 1979 which brought in Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the first executive president and signalled the second Republic. It also conducted the general elections of 1983 which retained Shehu Shagari at the helm for the second term. Shortly after the inauguration of Shehu Shagari for the second term in office, there was another military takeover by General Muhammadu Buahari on 31st December, 1983. The regime was subsequently overthrown by the military junta in a palace coup led by General Ibrahim Babangida on 31st December, 1985.

After two years in office, the military president set up the National Electoral Commission (NEC) headed by Eme Awa in 1987, with the authorization of organizing elections meant to fulfil the transition programme of General Babangida which was targeted at returning the country to civilian dispensation. In 1993 NEC as the umpire conducted the general election which was widely believed to have been the freest and fairest election in the country. The presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) MKO Abiola won the election with a clear margin. However, the election was annulled, so the inauguration of the new democratic government didn't see the light of the day for the reasons best known to the then military president, General Ibrahim Babangida. To justify his calculation, General Babangida on 26th August, 1993 constituted the Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Adegunle Shonekan.

Barely 84 days in office, General Sanni Abacha staged another coup which led to the demise of the Interim National Government on 17th November, 1993. Just after being two years in office, the military government dissolved the NEC in 1993, establishing the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) with Okon Uya as chairman, succeeded by Chief Sumner Dagogo – Jack in December 1995 with the directive to organize another election. It conducted

election for Local Government Councils to National Assembly. Those elected were ineffective till the death of General Abacha on 8th June, 1998 upon which the whole process was aborted.

In 1998, the military administration of former Head of State, General Abdusalam Abubakar dissolved the NECON and established the INEC with Justice Ephraim Akpata as chairman. It organized transitional elections that ushered in the Fourth Republic on 29th May, 1999. According to the Official website of the Commission, "... as a permanent body, INEC comprises the workforce recruited since 1987 under the defunct National Electoral Commission (NEC). Its presence has been established in all the 36 states, the Federal Capital Territory as well as in the 774 Local Government Areas of Nigeria (www.inecnigeria.org. Retrieved 2 April 2020). Even with its offices established across the Federation plus the various reforms aimed at repositioning the Commission to hold credible elections capable of sustaining Nigeria under a democratic rule, there exist nefarious issues derailing the system and may prevent it from achieving its goal of credible polls in the nearest future.

IV. Discussing Issues and Complications in Nigeria's Electoral Process

The electoral process in Nigeria is not devoid of issues which have affected the electoral process. They have posed more problems. For instance, Omoregbe quoted St. Augustine as saying:

"Remove justice and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale. What St. Augustine means here is that justice is so essential to government that without justice, there can be no government" (Omoregbe, 1993:127).

We too can paraphrase and say in the Augustinian manner that remove nefarious issues from the electoral process in Nigeria and what is governance but a tool in the hands of endowed and dexterous people on a large scale. However, this has remained a utopia to Nigerian society as no doubt the country is wallowing in electoral catastrophe, subsequently giving room for unscrupulous politicians to have an easy access to the seat of power. Conversely, Nwosu (2006) argued:

"The lack of accountability on the part of elected officeholders in Nigeria is easily discountenanced by the incumbents. Their brazen alibi is that people's votes did not bring them into office, so, accountability to voters is irrelevant. Indeed, candidates who receive the most votes can be denied victory... As a result, seeking access to state power becomes a contest without rules".

Some of the nefarious issues in the electoral process in Nigeria are the following:

The issue of corruption

The term corruption is not a system-specific phenomenon but a universal one. The term has different forms or manifestations. This could include graft or embezzlement of public funds, stealing of state property, offering of a bribe to obtain undue or unmerited favour, extortion, nepotism and others. Many of these practices are common and prevalent among the Nigerians. This was summarized in the words of the former Premier of Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who said:

"Since independence, our governments have been a matter of few holding the cow for the strongest and most cunning to milk, under those circumstances, everybody runs over everybody to make good at the expense of others" (Awolowo, 1979 cited in Adesote and Abimbola, 2012. p. 84).

No wonder, the country has always been consistently rated as one of the most corruption-ridden nations in the world by Transparency International. A subset of this scourge, electoral corruption, is seen by many people as one of the major impairments facing the electoral process in the country. It subverts the will of the people and concentrates power in dishonest hands. Making a

case of how corruption threatens Nigeria, its election and also a herculean task for his administration, President Muhammadu Buhari noted:

“As president, I have tried to judiciously exercise the trust vested in me to combat the problems of corruption, insecurity and an inequitable economy. All are important. But amongst them, one stands above the others as both a cause and aggravator of the rest. It is, of course, corruption” (www.pulse.ng. Retrieved 4 April, 2020).

Be that as it may, even the exclusive prerogative of the president in hiring and firing of the chairman and members of the Commission doesn't exempt the revered office from contributing to this anti-societal ill. The fact of a visible pressure of the chairman's appointment being at stake can also influence its decision in the president's favour. In a similar assertion, Salahu (2015. p. 268) opined,

“As the president appoints, he has the power to terminate such appointments. Thus, for the sake of appointment and security of tenure of the commission, members are easily manipulated by the president and his agents who appoint them. Where for such commissioner's show uncompromising attitude, irrespective of the statutory provision of five years tenure got removed. This has been responsible for the constant reconstitution of the body. More so, some of the appointees are card-carrying members of the president's party or in other ways got appointed through an influential individual. For instance, Dr. Guobadia and Professor Maurice Iwu (who) led commissions in preparation for 2003 and 2007 elections had many of its commissioners to be card-carrying of the ruling party.”

Expressing his opinion on how electoral corruption could be detrimental and spell doom for the society, the acting Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Ibrahim Magu speaking through the Secretary of the Commission Ola Olukoyede at the National Policy Dialogue on Eradicating Electoral Corruption argued,

“A government that pays its way into power is hardly expected to be accountable; its priority upon assumption of office would be how to recoup its investment. That is the open sesame to corruption in public life, a phenomenon that has held us down as a nation” (www.allafrica.com. Retrieved 4 April 2020).

This difficulty, identified by scholars as being responsible for the slow pace of development and also behind stunted growth in all sectors, is exemplified in the words of Dike (2003:1) when he asserted that “... the money induced political power struggle has a corrosive effect on the political process. However, the relationship between money, politics and corruption could be summed up as moneybag + politics = corruption”.

Malaise of electoral malpractice

Another salient issue engulfing Nigeria's electoral process is the strategy of electoral malpractice. The phenomenon is death-defying and precarious for the system. Electoral malpractices refer to unacceptable and unethical dealings, attitudes and behaviours that typically pan out during pre-election and post-election periods. Additionally, it could also mean actions or deeds that are strategically fathomed to undermine, violate and truncate the laid down rules of the Electoral Act. However, electoral malpractices are usually perpetrated through the connivance of entities like politicians, security agencies and electoral officials. Uduma and Emerole (2015. pp. 74-75) observed,

“At elections, tales of stuffed voters' cards into ballot boxes, and outright and open bribery of electoral officials have become household issues. From the 1959 elections which were observed as relatively free and fair, carried embryo of the degeneration and that has come to perpetually afflict the country's electoral process to date”.

This connivance is a self-centred and selfish agenda geared towards manipulation of election results in an unpopular candidate's favour in the contest. Ejigbile (2015) remarked succinctly that all candidates and political parties are always out to win votes, and they would wish to catch votes even when they know that they are not embraced by the people. The desperation on the part of electoral officials at subverting people's votes has seen them introduce new terminology of 'inconclusive election' into the Nigerian polity. This position holds that in an election contest if the total numbers of cancelled votes are more than the total number of 'lead votes' or margin between the first two contestants, such elections are declared inconclusive and a new date fixed for the exercise.

Syndrome of electoral violence

Another antithetical issue in Nigeria's electoral process is electoral violence. To have its idea, there is a need to understand violence first. Violence as a phenomenon is seen as the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to affect decisions against the will of others. In other words, it is an action or behaviour which is anchored on the use of physical force meant or intended to cause distress, hurt, damage and kill another person. However, electoral violence, which is one of the various forms of violence, means a tactic adopted by desperate politicians to cut corners at all cost during the election period. Conceptualizing electoral violence, Igbuzor (2010) defined it as any act of violence perpetrated in the course of political activities including pre-, during and post-election periods, and may include acts like thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and electoral process, causing bodily harm or injury to any person connected with the electoral process, etc.

It is almost an inbuilt strategy common for an average Nigerian politician. The approach is to lay siege and assault political opponents who are posing threats to their political ambition. Nonetheless, the pattern of electoral violence is believed to be of the following dimensions: intraparty, interparty, and pre- and post-election periods. This act is usually supported and made to be successful because of the humongous population of unemployed youths. That is, with a little tip of money and ammunition procured, the youths are easily influenced by the politicians. Burdin (2009 cited in Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart 2010: 3) observed that politicians and party bosses found a ready supply of unemployed men, frequently youths, willing to perpetrate violence in exchange for pay and firepower. As a result, there have been telling and overbearing drawbacks on the electoral process. It has also led to wanton destruction of property, kidnapping and killings of important personalities.

The list of prominent and less famous politicians killed during 1999–2019 seems inexhaustible, the notable ones among them were Chief Bola Ige, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Federation who was gruesomely murdered at his Bodija residence in Ibadan, Oyo State on 23rd December, 2001, Chief Ayo Daramola, a People's Democratic Party gubernatorial aspirant in Ekiti State who was murdered in his country home Ijan-Ekiti, Engr. Funsho Williams, a People's Democratic Party governorship hopeful in Lagos State, Odunayo Omobolanle a staunch supporter of Sen. Iyiola Omisoro, who was the Deputy Governor of Osun State at that time in 2010, Chief Dipo Dina of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) was murdered, and Tunde Omojola and Taye Fasuba in Ekiti State were murdered in 2005 and 2009 respectively.

Vote-buying and federal might mess

Vote-buying and federal might are two syndromes plaguing Nigeria's electoral process in no small measure. Vote-buying on the one hand refers to negotiation or transaction that centers on buying and selling of votes between politicians and electorates. Kwanghga and Tarfa (2015 cited in Nkwede & Abah, 2019: 57) noted,

“Vote-buying as a phenomenon is neither system-specific nor space-bound as it is common to all political systems, be it advanced or developing, medieval or contemporary. It, therefore,

exists in all regions and climes and differs in magnitude and manifestations from one polity to the other”.

Though the ugly trend has been existing in the system for long, it is not as sophisticated as being witnessed now. It was in abeyance and after a long absence it recently found its way back into the electoral system during the 27th November, 2016 governorship election in Ondo State where parties were offering as high as 3,000 naira per voter. Ever since then, it has been the normal practice in the subsequent elections throughout the nation. For instance, in the 14th July 2018 governorship election in Ekiti State, the amount offered was up to 5,000 naira by some of the parties involved. However, the 10th October, 2020 governorship election in Ondo State saw parties offering voters 5,000, 7,000 and 10,000 naira respectively. According to Aisha Abdullahi, Co-chair, Yiaga Africa 2020 Ondo Election Observation Mission, the Ondo State governorship election was marred with vote-buying. She further asserted that there were reports of vote-buying from Akure South, Ose, Ondo West, Ilaje and Akure North with the secrecy of the ballot compromised (*Dailypost*, 11 October 2020). Nweke and Abah (2015: 59) noted,

“Vote-buying during elections is not peculiar to Nigeria or new in the nation’s democratic process, the practice has in recent times become a significant tool of securing political power as witnessed in the Edo State gubernatorial election and widely witnessed in the July 14, 2018, Ekiti State governorship polls. Howbeit, the magnitude of vote-buying and selling in the 2018 Ekiti State election was too glaring to the extent that both local and international observers decried that such bizarre engagement has never been experienced in the Nigerian electoral trajectory”.

This is not peculiar to any particular party. The highest bidder among the parties usually has an edge over other contesting parties. Apart from the foregoing, the rationale behind this strategy stems from the fact that a huge number of electorates in Nigeria are poor and vulnerable. Therefore, it becomes easy for politicians to offer incentives in exchange for their votes. Kramon (2011) argued that vote-buying signals a willingness and capacity to deliver small private goods which tend to be more highly valued by poor voters. However, a closer look at politics and polity in Nigeria shows that ever since the introduction of Card Reader Machines (CRMs) and other related technologies, politicians have since moved from the era of election rigging and embraced the new strategy which is vote-buying during election.

Federal might on the other hand, depicts a situation whereby a preferred or anointed candidate among the contestants is lorded by the presidency of the rest of the party and the people. In other words, such candidates are backed by the federal government at the expense of people’s wish. This act is done at the primary election and perpetrated during the general elections. It is worth stressing that it has been unfolding for a while but has just been redefined over time. For instance, in 2007 party governorship primary of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Engr. Segun Oni who came third was given the nod as the party’s flag bearer at the expense of first and runners up candidates. It panned out as a result of the special interest of then President Olusegun Obasanjo in the candidacy of Segun Oni.

In the 2018 gubernatorial primary election of All Progressive Party (APC), it was the federal might that unfolded and favoured the emergence of Kayode Fayemi as All Progressive Congress (APC) flag bearer. With about four months to the election, he was serving as Minister of Mines and Steel in President Muhammadu Buhari’s cabinet. As soon as his intention was made known, he was given every apparatus needed to make him defeat more than twenty other aspirants vying on the platform of the party. Astonishingly, the federal might syndrome which was propagated by the federal government to meddle in the election of who became the governor of Ekiti State, has now been redefined and introduced at the state level by beneficial of the idea, Kayode Fayemi. The governor of Ekiti State single-handedly picked all the assembly members in Ekiti without having to scale the hurdle of All Progressive Party (APC) primaries in preparation for the general elections of 2019. It is obvious that this ugly trend may skyrocket and duplicate in many states in 2023.

V. Potential Ways of Improving the Electoral Process

Based on the study, issues like corruption, electoral malpractices, electoral violence, vote-buying and federal might, posed danger to the electoral process and dysfunction to the democratic consolidation in the country. However, to stem this tide in the system, the following are potential drives needed.

1. Though the Electoral Act, 2010 recognizes the independence of the INEC, it exists in principle alone and not in practice. And if the bull must be taken by the horn, the electoral body has to be detached from the caprices of the executive arm of government. For instance, the appointment of the Commission's chairman is largely the prerogative of the President. It should be done conventionally in that the next or the most senior officer within the Commission should assume the position whenever there is a vacancy. In other words, the appointment shouldn't be from outside but from within it.
2. A substantive issue that also needs addressing is the electoral violence. It is lucid that this attitude is common among youths but doesn't exempt the elderly either. However, going by the fact that more than 60 per cent of the youths and a sizeable number of them are unemployed which invariably makes them tools in the hands of politicians, especially during the electioneering period. One way which seems feasible for curtailing this is for the government to concentrate more on its Social Investment Programme (SIP). It should also engage the youths in profitable ventures through entrepreneurial skills that are capable of solving their predicament.
3. On tackling corruption and vote-buying syndromes in the electoral cycle, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) has to raise its bar of orientation in this regard. It should sensitize the general public on the need to be upright when it comes to electing representatives. This can be done by organizing political awareness, symposiums, lectures and workshops targeted at espousing the danger inherent in engaging in such acts.

VI. Conclusion

Democracy is an index for development in an egalitarian society. There exists a nexus between democracy and development, and democracy presupposes development in a society. The electoral process is the mainstay on which democracy flourishes. However, some nefarious issues are capable of undermining the process in Nigeria. This study indicates that perennial and novel complications like corruption, electoral malpractices, electoral violence syndrome, vote-buying and federal might are not only drawbacks for the electoral process but also antithetical to the development of the country. Therefore, the electoral process as a force in any society has to be a pillar that is established on tenets capable of standing the test of the complications discussed.

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