



# Understanding and Addressing Drivers of High Cost of Presidential Democracy in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999 and the attendant politics, elections and civil governance has brought to the fore the debate about the role of money and other administrative resources in politics. The debate is all the more accentuated by developments which have thrown up godfathers seeking a pound of flesh from state resources after allegedly sponsoring godsons into political offices. Among other things, this paper investigated the interface between campaign financing in a post-colonial democratic state between 1999 and 2015 in Nigeria. The study is a documentary research and data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method. Utilizing the neo-marxist theory, the paper established that the electoral laws are generally couched ambiguously by politicians with vested interests in order to weaken the enforcement capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as well as facilitate the advancement of the electoral interests of the 'political entrepreneurs'. In conclusion, we posit that the ongoing war against corruption may not yield the desired results until we reform Nigeria's political and campaign finance laws and policies. Beyond legal and policy reform, we also need to implement the reformed laws to the letter.

**Keywords:** Political/Campaign Finance, Electoral Laws, Election Management Body, Nigeria Democracy, Election & Neo-Marxism.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of money in elections is not new in Nigeria or in any part of the planet. Money and other resources are needed for political parties to run their administration and for aspirants to run primaries, and then, the candidates who emerge from the primaries to execute the main elections. Essentially, politics involves the use and disbursement of administrative and material resources. However, the use of money should simply enable aspirants to get across to the members of the party or delegates during primary elections and to sell their ideas or manifestoes for seeking office. Again, during the main elections, money and other resources enable the candidates to sell their ideas to the voting public.

The use of money has never been allowed for vote-buying or peddling undue influence on the electorate. Vote-buying, inducement and bribery have always been criminal offences under the Constitution and various Electoral Act and Criminal Codes. Various punishments including prison sentences and fines or both have been imposed on such criminal conduct in the law books. The extant Electoral Act provides limitations of N1bn, N200m, N40m, N20m, N10m and N1m for candidates contesting president, governor, membership of the Senate, House of Representatives, state House of Assembly and councillor respectively. This is the ceiling the candidate can spend on their election but not the ceiling the political party can spend on the same election. The political party's expenditure on a candidate in an election is not limited by law despite the fact that the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) gives the Independent National Electoral Commission, in consultation with political parties, the power to determine the maximum amount to be spent by a political party on candidates. Again, the maximum amount an individual can give to a political party is not limited by law.

All the foregoing gaps in the law can be filled by INEC through the use of its regulatory powers under Section 153 of the Electoral Act. Section 153 states that, “*The Commission may, subject to the provisions of this Act, issue regulations, guidelines, or manuals for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this Act and for its administration thereof.*” Aside from the foregoing, the monitoring of expenses of candidates for an election is a very tedious and difficult assignment. INEC as presently resourced and staffed cannot effectively monitor expenditures of candidates from the ninety -one (91) registered political parties across the federation. Also, despite the attempts by the financial regulatory agencies and various laws against money laundering, Nigeria to a great extent still runs a cash-based economy. This is more the case in politics as politicians spend huge amounts of money which cannot be justifiable in normal ethical and legal jurisdictions. It is a notorious fact that delegates electing candidates demand and receive money and generally vote for the highest bidder. These monies are disbursed sometimes in foreign currencies such as the United States dollar, British Pound and Euro. It is another notorious fact that many candidates, especially those with overwhelming financial muscle or incumbents who control public resources spend above the ceilings provided for candidates in the Electoral Act. Monies do not change hands officially, but behind closed doors and sometimes in the dead of the night where no one, including INEC officials or the security agencies is watching. This is where the complicated relationship between money and politics in the country meet and requires a close examination.

### **Contextualizing Cost of Democracy and its Tenets**

Every population, ethnic group or clan needs one form of governance or another to ensure the survival of its people, safeguard society’s interests, ensure security and peaceful coexistence. Although there are various variants of governance, two main extensive governance systems are recognized widely across the world: you are either a dictatorship or a democracy.

While democratic and open governments are held up as the best system and dictatorships are frowned upon, we wish to state with emphasis, that there is no “one size fits all” system of governance.

Democracies are generally preferred because of the protection of human rights, transparent and accountable governance, open government, free speech and stability. Almost all modern definitions of democracy encapsulate Dahl’s (1971) dictum that democracy is a political system in which government reflects the will of the people. It is well established that this requires not only popular participation but also competition (or, contestation as Dahl would have it). It is not uncommon to take as a starting point the Schumpeterian notion that identifies electoral competition as the minimal criterion of a democratic system. In other words, democracy is not only a “regime in which those who govern are selected through contested elections” (Przeworski et al 2000, 15; c.f. Przeworski and Limongi 1997, 178) but more importantly “democracy is a system of government in which parties lose elections” (Przeworski, 1991, 10; c.f. Sartori 1987). For this to become reality, elections must first allow for multiple parties and candidates to compete, and second, they must be sufficiently free from manipulation to allow for *de facto* competition, resulting in alternation in power if citizens so desire.

Hence, elections must be multiparty and free from manipulation in order to function as “instruments of democracy” (Dimond, 2002). In representative democracy, elections function as a Linkage mechanism between citizens and representatives, giving citizens the power to choose representatives to govern in their stead (Dahl, 1989). The power of citizens to replace their representatives at elections, allows citizens to hold incumbents to account for their past performance, and at the same time creates incentives for representatives to be responsive to citizens’ needs (Donno, 2013); Przeworski, Stokes and Manin 1999, Strøm, Müller and Bergman 2003). So when elections function as ‘instruments of democracy’ they generate both accountability and responsiveness of governments vis a vis their citizens (Lindberg, 2009).

Irrespective of the above, democratic systems also have the downside of high cost of periodic elections, the influence of special interests on elected leaders and the general lack of a sharp national focus, in some cases, because of the frequent changing of leadership and change of national development plans anytime such changes happen, and also the generally slow nature of the decision- making process. We are going to concentrate on the former. That is, democracy at what price? Democracy is expensive, talking of the four-yearly ritual of election-related costs. Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission

budgeted well over \$550m dollars for the 2015 elections. While speaking in 2017, Chief Technical Adviser to the INEC Chairman, Prof. Bolade Eyiola revealed that an estimated N1 trillion was spent by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, political parties and candidates for the 2015 elections.

The revelation, at a two-day Learning Conference on the Regional Cost of Politics, immediately drew strong disapprovals from concerned stakeholders with assertions that the high cost was the bedrock of the corruption that pervades the political system. Among those who flayed the high cost of elections were legislators, Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, President of the Transition Monitoring Group, TMG and Mr. Ibrahim Musa, Executive Director of the Civil Society Advocacy and Legislative Centre, CISLAC. Some in the House of Representatives, however, described the high figure as provided by INEC as unrealistic as they put the blame on civil servants, who they claimed, inflate the cost of elections to their benefit.

It was revealed at the conference that the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, expended N8.74 billion in traceable media and other related expenses in the 2015 elections while all the other opposition parties expended N2.91 billion for similar activities (SERAP). Chief Technical Adviser to the INEC Chairman, Prof. Bolade Eyiola disclosed, “ *in Nigeria, our core cost was \$547 million. It is perhaps the most expensive elections that we have ever seen. I have seen figures somewhere of between \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion and believe me; it is true if we knew what happened. In one scandal, we heard of \$115 million*” ... (Ogunsesan,2017).

In her remarks, an INEC National Commissioner, Prof. Anthonia Simbine said the level of money in politics “*is responsible for the kinds of governance we have at any given time. If you make an investment, you would want to reap from that,*” (Ogunsesan,2017) she said. According to her, some political parties have been angling for public support, saying there is no existing legislation to back that. On party financing, she said:

We have existing limits in the legal framework, but this has become somehow very unrealistic because there are no enforcement framework or capacity when people do what they are not supposed to do. This is more because our society is cash-based and so the capacity of INEC is still very weak in tracking and monitoring party financing. “A review we did in 2015 showed that there is largely no record-keeping, including keeping receipts of financial support by political parties (Ogunsesan,2017).

Country Representative of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Adebowale Olorunmola, noted that the cost of the 2015 election was higher than that of 2011. According to him,

In 2011, all the opposition parties put together spent N2.04 billion in traceable expenditure, while the then ruling People’s Democratic Party PDP spent N5.01 billion. In 2015, all the opposition parties spent N2.91 billion while PDP spent N8.74 billion. These are traceable expenses which were spent on media advertisements, campaign materials among others, to the exclusion of money spent in underhand dealings and the use of state-owned facilities including stadia for campaigns and other political activities( Olorunmola, 2016, P. 8).

### **Theoretical Framework: Neo-Marxist Theory**

This study is anchored on the combination of the theory of relative autonomy of the state. The state relative autonomy theory is situated within the ambit of the neo-Marxist political economy paradigm. The theory of relative state autonomy depicts the level or degree of detachment or aloofness of the state in the discharge of its duties such as mediating inter-class and intra-class struggles. Thus, this theory presupposes that in any state or political society, there are two levels of contradiction, namely primary contradiction and secondary contradiction. Primary contradiction is inter-class struggle or depicts class struggle between two antagonistic classes such as the ruling class and the ruled class or the bourgeois class and the proletariat (i.e. the working class). Whilst, secondary contradiction is the intra-class struggle, denoting class conflicts within the ruling-class or between different segments of the ruling-class. Marx and Engels demonstrate this intractable phenomenon of class struggle when they declare in the preface of their book, *The Communist Manifesto* that “the history of all the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” Marx and Engels, (1977 & Lenin,1976). The exponents of the theory hold that a

state can exhibit either low or high relative autonomy. A state exhibits high autonomy when there is high commodification of capital or excessive penetration of capital into the economy such that the bourgeois class indulges in accumulation of capital through direct exploitation of the working class or appropriation of surplus value when they enter into social relationships of production (i.e. private capitalism). Here, the state is not interventionist, in other words, it does not intervene in the domestic economy like participating in the productive activities (i.e. public/state enterprises) or controlling or nationalizing means of production. The role of state here, therefore, is to regulate. As such, the state is relatively an impartial umpire meditating inter-class and intra-class struggles through harmonization and reconciliation of class interests. The developed capitalist states of the West are, therefore, considered to exemplify this high relative autonomy, and as a result, exhibit high level of human rights observance and protection Ake, 1976; Alavi, (1973). Conversely, a state exhibits low autonomy when there is low commodification of capital or low penetration of (private) capital into the economy in such a way that the ruling class is constantly engaged in primitive accumulation of capital through embezzlement of public fund. The state becomes the only avenue for capital accumulation.

The state is thus, interventionist for engaging in productive activities of means of productive activities (i.e. public corporation) by nationalization of major means of production. This state does not limit itself to regulatory rule and is hence compromised, such that instead of rising above class struggle it is deeply immersed in it Ake, (1981 &1985). The Nigerian state like other developing state exhibits a low level of the autonomy of the state as a result of low commodification of capital. Under the electric mixture of mixed economy, Nigeria experiences the phenomenon of lack of penetration of (private) capital into the economy creating a parasitic petty bourgeois class whose major source of accumulation of capital is the state. Hence, the Nigerian state becomes the only avenue for (primitive) accumulation of capital through which the governing class (i.e. petty bourgeoisie) produces and reproduces their dominance. The implication of the low autonomy of the Nigerian state is that it is immersed in the class struggle rather than rising above it leading to intense struggle for the control of the state for primitive accumulation and marginalization of everything (Ake, 1981).

Nico Poulantza's moves further than the classical Marxist concept of the state by stating that the state's distinctiveness from the bourgeoisie is what gives it autonomy. There are three realms of the Capitalists mode of production in society-the economic, ideological and political realms. The function of the capitalist state is to reproduce the mode of production in which the bourgeoisie are free to control capital. It also reproduces inequality and it further supervises the power of the bourgeoisie so that they do not get over-thrown. In addition, through the use of ideology (socialization of the people in a passive way), the state assists the bourgeoisie in the distortion of reality ( Poulantzas, 1973). Ralph Miliband (1969 & 1977) equally carries out an excellent polemic against liberals who claim that a pluralist society creates equality and dispersion of resources in society. He finds inequality and poverty on the contrary. Why then is the capitalist state not overthrown? It legitimates itself through elections, parliament, labour, press, political parties, churches, judiciary and schools, all of which are controlled by the bourgeoisie. A state has a separate interest of its own outside those of the bourgeoisie. Its structural position may lead it to oppose the interests of holders of wealth for its own legitimization (Miliband, 1969).

In spite of the unresolved academic ambiguities and controversies concerning the nature of the postcolonial state, observers do agree about certain basic specificities of this state. In the first place, very few would dispute Hamza Alavi's contention that the nature of the state in postcolonial societies throws up a wider range of questions and issues than have been posed and addressed by Marxist theories of the state in the industrialized societies of North America and Europe (Alavi, 1973:40).

Hamza Alavi has also made some observations on the same sore which could assist us in explaining the future direction of what he refers to as a "post colonial society". Using his native Pakistan and Bangladesh, he makes important substantiations which could be useful in generalizing about the African experience. He notes that whereas the nation state in Europe came about as a result of the revolution of the bourgeoisie, there was no such event in the post colonial society. Rather if a revolution did occur, it was a top-down affair, an import of the imperial bourgeoisie. This is not good enough because for a revolution to be meaningful, it would need to come from below, from the colony itself. Moreover, at the

time flag independence, the super structure was overdeveloped in relation to the substructure. In fact, the substructure remains with the imperial state at the time flag independence was won so that the natures of the economy in addition to the obtaining ideology of the state were determined by the imperial state. In the final analysis, three dominant classes instead of one could be observed in the post colonial state: the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the native bourgeoisie and a landed oligarchy with a military bureaucratic stratum playing the role of the state (Alavi, 1979).

In other words, primarily because of the specific circumstances of its historical development, the state in postcolonial societies has attributes and specificities which clearly distinguish it from the state in the developed world, both socialist and capitalist. Indeed, Claude Ake has wondered 'whether we can properly talk of the state in Africa' because, in his view, 'autonomization' is the essence of the state as a modality of domination and there are few social formations in Africa that are capitalist enough or socialist enough to be identifiable as boasting this form of domination (Ake, 1985). Thus, any attempt to theorize about the state in postcolonial societies must recognize the peculiar and distinctive historical circumstances that have shaped the development of this state.

In the second place, it is obvious that the postcolonial state has, in the name of promoting development, assumed a massive and quite exceptional economic role in postcolonial social formations. The postcolonial state, through its ever expanding public sector, directly owns the most productive assets and appropriates the bulk of development resources in the new colony. It is of course true that even the state in advanced capitalist societies is playing an increasingly prominent role in the economy and that in socialist countries public ownership and control of the economy is in fact the norm. Nonetheless economic role of the postcolonial state must be seen as distinct and exceptional. In the first place, the economic role of the postcolonial state is much more direct and extensive than that of the state in advanced capitalism where capital accumulation largely remains the task of an increasingly vibrant and sophisticated bourgeoisie. In the second place, unlike in the established socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the economic role of the postcolonial state is not always legitimized by an official commitment to socialist economic planning and also does not take place at the 'socialist economic planning and also does not take place at the 'socialist' or post-capitalist level of the development of productive forces and/or relations of production.

The point above about the economic centrality of the postcolonial state immediately confronts us with another of its more compelling attributes: its role as a source of wealth for aspiring social-economic groups in the periphery of capitalism (Suberu, 1989). This critical role of the postcolonial state as an instrument of class formation and consolidation has been identified by Ralph Miliband as one of the most distinctive features of the state in Third World formations. As he put it, 'The state is here the source of economic power as well as an instrument of it; the state is a major means of production' (Miliband, 1977:109). Richard Sklar has, in a similar vein, observed that dominant class formation in developing countries 'is a consequence of the exercise of power' and that 'class relations, at bottom, are determined by relations of power not production' (Sklar, 1979:536-537).

The central role of the postcolonial state in the process of class formation and consolidation has important consequences for the character of politics or the competition for state power. To put it bluntly, the economic centrality of the state in postcolonial societies transforms the struggle for state power into a particularly frantic, fraudulent and violent affair which throttles such requisites for liberal democracy as moderation, tolerance and respect for the rules of the political game (Suberu, 2001). The role of the economic centrality of the state in thwarting constitutional behaviour is bluntly acknowledged by Ake;

Because of its extraordinary importance, the struggle to control the power of the state becomes very intense-one might say hobbesian. Since the stakes are so high the competitors do everything to win. Little attention is paid to constitutional behaviour, and the law is amended, reinterpreted, on blatantly violated from day to day to suit the purposes of the hegemonic faction of the bourgeoisie (Ake, 1976:11).

Relating the theory to our discussion, we posit that the huge amount expended on elections was a direct correlation to the spate of corruption brought about by the parasitic capitalists of various strands. According to Douglas Rimmer:

By the nineteen-sixties the fortunes of businesses, communities and households in Nigeria hinged on governmental favour and political influence. Farmers were subjected to marketing monopolies because governments required control of surpluses extractable from their labour. Wage earners were raised up from time to time because their votes were believed marketable and their hostility dangerous. One community received amenities because its political support was needed another was denied them because it had voted wrong .....’ Nearly all businessmen were necessarily in politics, because the state had become the main source of both finance and contracts, and nearly all politicians were in business(1978,p.65).

In the seventies and onwards, the Nigerian state became a chief beneficiary of the phenomenal rise in global prices for oil. Consequently, the politicization of economic life in Nigeria became even more dramatic and pervasive indeed, The Second National Development Plan, 1970-74, proclaimed that it was ‘vital for Government to acquire and control on behalf of the Nigerian society, the greater portion of the productive assets of the country’ (Rimmer, 1970.

As Larry Diamond in 1982 wrote, in Nigeria, state power the control over such rewards as government contracts, jobs, development projects, and import licences, and over the coercive machinery to preserve that control-continues to represent what it did two decades ago; the primary of national wealth, the chief route of access to the resources and opportunities of class formation. If the articulation of the private sector in the past 15 years has opened possibilities for upward mobility outside the state that did not exist in the First Republic, so the petroleum boom has opened possibilities for accumulation of wealth in office that could not even have been imagined two decades ago (Diamond, 1982:661).

Predictably, the primary effect of this dramatic expansion in the economic role of the Nigerian state has been not to make it any more effective in meeting public demands but to increase its vulnerability to manipulation and abuse by office holders and to encourage an extraordinary premium on the control of state power. As Ake puts it in a memorable statement:

As things stand now, the Nigerian state appears to intervene everywhere and to own virtually everything including access to status and wealth. Inevitably a desperate struggle to win control of state power ensues since this control means for all practical purposes being all powerful and owing everything. Politics becomes warfare, a matter of life and death (Ake, 1981:162).

That is, politicians can break the bank to win election and give priority to recovering their election expenses ahead of any other thing once in office. This revelation is very worrisome in the sense fact that the cost of election in Nigeria is becoming outrageous and ridiculous, and that is what is accelerating corruption in Nigeria because when people spend this kind of money to win elections, the first thing they do is to recover the money they have spent and that is why people and development suffer as a result. Also election budget and figure is over bloated by civil servants. Most of the things by civil servants are fictitious; they are not properly monitored. The figure they give is amazing.

### **Cost & Benefits of High Cost of Presidential Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2015**

#### **Drivers of Cost of Democracy**

A don and former INEC national commissioner Professor Lai Olurode, in 2017 declared that elections in Nigeria is too expensive for all the parties – Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties and even candidates. Professor Olurode stated this while delivering a paper entitled: “Slaughter’s slab as a

metaphor,” at the main auditorium, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos State. The professor of Sociology posited that the list of items to budget for in the course of electioneering by all the stakeholders continued to be inexhaustible, adding that this phenomenon had become a clog in the wheel of progress of Nigeria, so as to have a sustainable dividend of democracy. The Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) while explaining why conducting an election in Nigeria is expensive posited that logistics, personnel costs, and electoral disputes were responsible for the increase in government spending for elections. The Chief Press Secretary to INEC Chairman, Rotimi Oyekanmi, stated this in Abuja when he addressed the media to explain why the commission earmarked whooping N19.1 billion for Anambra governorship election in 2017. According to him, INEC maintains over 800 offices and 16,000 regular staff nationwide, hire thousands of ad-hoc staff who are mainly corps members, and acquires sensitive materials abroad due to integrity deficit and trust issues in the country. He noted that provisions made for the conduct of fresh elections ordered by the courts following electoral disputes also added to the increasing cost of conducting elections in Nigeria.

Oyekanmi said:

Nigeria is a big country and the population is quite high. So many things are put in place for elections in Nigeria. We hire a lot of ad-hoc staff for elections. We have the security apparatus. We have the ballot boxes and papers, and other sensitive materials we acquire abroad due to integrity deficit and trust issues in the country. A lot of logistics go into elections in Nigeria(Jannah, 2017)

In 2016 we had N50 billion, and of course about N20 billion of that went into personnel cost. We have over 16,000 staff. We have over 800 offices nationwide – one in each of the 774 local governments across the country. We are in the 36 states of the federation and Abuja, and all these staff has to be paid and have to be mobilized. That is different from the thousands of ad-hoc staff that we need during elections. You know we rely on members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to conduct our elections. But of course, in 2016, we spent N87 billion on elections that was; because, last year we had over 160 elections that were conducted; rerun elections, by-elections, and end of tenure elections including Edo and Ondo gubernatorial elections. Luckily for us this year, we have only Anambra to conduct towards the end of the year, and our proposal for this year is quite less for electoral recurrent. In 2016, electoral recurrent was about N24 billion but this year; we have N19.1 billion because we have fewer elections to conduct. So, the logistics that go into all these things increase the cost of conducting elections.

Then, you have the dispute after elections which may necessitate the conduct of fresh elections and it costs money. These are the factors that make conducting elections in Nigeria very expensive (Jannah,2017).

Reacting to the revelation on the humongous amount spent on the 2015 election, Dr. Akiyode-Afolabi, the TMG president called for a cut down on logistics and other deployments which she said tend to increase the cost of elections. According to her,

One of our concerns is that Nigeria invests so much in elections and there is the need for INEC and the government to begin to look at how to reduce the cost of elections. Even if you look at the cost of producing voters’ cards and you put it across for all eligible voters, you will see that it is a huge amount of money, whereas these same people also have national identity cards or some other cards. On the day of elections, huge amounts of money are used to bring policemen, ad-hoc staff, trainings, so there is a need for us to have a cost effective elections and that can be done if we cut down some of these (Olorumola,2016, p. 8),.

Elections cost money, however. The political party has to set up a party secretariat in virtually every ward, state, and at the national level, pay staff, promote its brand and its agenda, organize meetings, pay sitting allowances, support candidates, run media advertisements, arrange receptions and entertainment, pay for logistics, buy vehicles, pay for air travels and road transportation, the organization of rallies and campaigns, reserve some tidy sum for lobbying at all levels including the lobbying of the media and other

groups in civil society. Win or lose eventually, every political party be it in Africa, Europe, America, or Asia knows that money drives the game of politics. This is no rocket science, no matter how unfortunate the implications may be. It is nonetheless for this reason that political parties write into their constitutions, means of raising funds. These include membership subscriptions, payment for expression of interest in elective positions, donations, fund raising activities, and support from friends and the corporate sector. For instance, a coalition of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under the aegis of the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in conjunction with United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), raised an alarm over the threats posed to the growth of the Nigerian economy by election spending, contending that there is an inextricable link between election spending and the health of the economy. According to the consortium of CSOs: *With attention shifted from governance and a lot of expenditure on campaign, the state of the economy in terms of depreciating exchange, inflation and reduced economic growth rate were bound to occur* (Guardian Editorial, March 12, 2015).

The CSJ report put the total amount spent by the two major political parties - PDP and APC on advertisements in the print media alone at N1.382 billion. Specifically, the group said “the total up to February 14, 2015 for the APC presidential candidate is N332.583 million, while the total up to February 14, 2015 for the PDP presidential candidate is N1.049 billion.” (Guardian Editorial, March 12, 2015). The group went further to list other campaign expenses of both candidates to justify the breach of the Act.

**Table 1: Sub-heads of Campaign Expenditure by Presidential Candidates of the PDP and APC**

| <b>Purpose of Expenditure</b>      | <b>PDP</b>          | <b>APC</b>            |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Campaign Rallies                   | N1.057 billion      | N595,082 million      |
| Bill Boards                        | N155.13 million     | N99.23 million        |
| Electronic Media Campaign Coverage | N508.35 million     | N391.05 million       |
| Electronic Media Advert            | N7.339 million      | N5.556 million        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>N2.5 billion</b> | <b>N1.091 billion</b> |

Source: *Guardian Editorial*, March 12, 2015

As shown in Table 2, the PDP spent N1.057 billion on campaign rallies while the APC spent N595.082 million. On bill boards, the PDP expended N155.13 million as against the APCs N99.23 million. Others are electronic media campaign coverage which glued N508.35 million from the PDP and N391.05 million from the APC; while electronic media advert gulped N7.399 million and N5.556 million for the PDP and APC respectively as revealed in table 2. In all the PDP expended N2.5 billion while the APC spent N1.091 billion as captured in table 2. When you add this amount to the expenditure incurred in the print media, you will arrive at a total of N3.882 billion for the PDP and N1.433 billion for the APC. All these are conservative figures since they have not taken into account other expenditures like hotel accommodation, transportation cost (air, sea and road), security, feeding, to mention but a few.

**Table 2: Cost of Parties' Expression of Interest and Candidate Nomination Form (2015 Elections)**

| <b>Party</b> | <b>Office in view</b> | <b>Expression of Interest</b> | <b>Nomination Fee</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>APC</b>   | Presidency            | ₦2,500,000                    | ₦25,000,000           | ₦27,500,000  |
|              | Governorship          | ₦500,000                      | ₦5,000,000            | ₦5,500,000   |
|              | Senate                | ₦3000,0000                    | ₦3,000,000            | ₦3,300,000   |
|              | House of Rep.         | ₦200,000                      | ₦2,000,000            | ₦2,200,000   |
| <b>PDP</b>   | Presidency            | ₦2,000,000                    | ₦20,000,000           | ₦22,000,000  |
|              | Governorship          | ₦1,000,000                    | ₦10,000,000           | ₦11,000,000  |
|              | Senate                | ₦500,000                      | ₦4,000,000            | ₦4,500,000   |
|              | House of Rep.         | ₦400,000                      | ₦2,000,000            | ₦2,400,000   |
| <b>APGA</b>  | Presidency            |                               |                       |              |
|              | Governorship          | ₦2,000,000                    | ₦10,000,000           | ₦12,000,000  |
|              | Senate                | ₦5,000,000                    | ₦3,000,000            | ₦3,500,000   |
|              | House of Rep.         | ₦500,000                      | ₦2,000,000            | ₦2,500,000   |

Source: Olorumola, A. (2016, P. 8), Cost of politics in Nigeria, London: West Minister Foundation for Democracy



That businessmen, interest groups and sundry individuals raised, within a few hours, for instance, the billions of naira to support campaigns for an elective office of an individual in a clime where millions of people are unemployed, is a tragic drama in which money is suddenly gaining ascendancy and reason thrown overboard. This is highly unacceptable!

Glaringly, the donors to all parties have sent a strong message that they have only played their cards face-up for selfish interests, the implication being that such donors would be key actors in the control of the nation’s economic levers upon a successful run of their beneficiary in the election. Some of the big-time donors or supporters are only taking the people for a ride through questionable contributions. It hurts further when some indefensible amount is announced as anonymous or coming from “unnamed friends”. Who are the faceless friends who are shy of being identified with a good cause, if this was?

Worse still are those governors and other government functionaries deploying public resources in their care to fund partisan political interests. Some 21 governors of the then ruling party (PDP) at the centre during a fund-raising dinner donated N50 million each amounting to N1.05 billion. Ironically, workers in some of the states in question were yet to be paid salaries for months at the time of the senseless donations. In addition to direct donation to parties and candidates, many have used public funds to place political adverts, financed rallies and other political activities and these cuts across all the leading parties. In financial matters, the constitution has always been abused, especially by those in the executive branch. While approved donations are recognized in any budget, the ceilings are constantly scaled by those in power. And this is done in active connivance with lawmakers. Any governor, who unilaterally donates huge public funds without the authorization of the lawmakers after all, ought to be made accountable, but this is never done since the lawmakers themselves are part of the deceit and are totally in the governors’ pockets.

Beyond that, a more fundamental point is the gradual erosion of democracy when groups and individuals practically hijack the system using their ill-gotten wealth. When money plays such a major role as it does now, the building blocks of democracy are dismantled, democratic culture suffers, and by extension, people. This development highlights the weakness of the followership as the people’s refusal to question their leaders means complicity.

**Table 3** below captures the contributions made by individuals, corporate bodies to Jonathan’s 2015 election.

**Table 1: List of Donors to President Goodluck Jonathan 2015 Campaign**

| S/N | Contributors   | Amount                 |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 1   | Tunde Ayeni  | ₦1 billion             |
| 2   | Tunde and Group of friends                                 | ₦2.6 billion           |
| 3   | Jerry Gana and friends                                     | ₦5 billion             |
| 4   | National Automotive Council                                | ₦450 million           |
| 5   | PDP Governors Forum (N50 million each x 21 governors)      | ₦1.05 billion          |
| 6   | Bala Shagaya Representing the Oil and Gas sector           | ₦5 billion             |
| 7   | Construction Sector  | ₦310 million           |
| 8   | Transport and Aviation Sector represented by Didi Ndimou   | ₦1 billion             |
| 9   | The Real Estate Sector represented by Oluchi Okoye         | ₦4 billion             |
| 10  | Food and Agric Sector represented by Chief Ominife Uzeogbu | ₦500 million           |
| 11  | Cizally Limited  | ₦250 million           |
| 12  | Power sector represented by Tunde Ayeni                    | ₦500 million           |
| 13  | National association of Stevedores                         | ₦25 million            |
| 14  | Mr. Sam Egwu   | ₦1 million             |
| 15  | Halima Jibril  | ₦5 million             |
| 16  | Ajuji Best Hotel   | ₦1 million             |
|     | <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>₦22.442 Billion</b> |

**Source:** Adopted and modified from *This Day Live*, 21st December, 2014.

Going by the scale of political campaigns by the two leading parties in the elections, where private jets fill the airspace as politicians shuttle between cities with passenger manifests of big wigs, the live coverage of political party rallies by national television stations running into several production hours, it could be argued that politicians spent billions of naira in achieving their dreams. Contacts and mobilisation of party faithful cost more than can be imagined by any Nigerian. Getting the blessing of the people that matter in the society for candidates cost the parties lots of fortunes though some actually had nothing to do to sway the outcome of the elections. Suffice to say, the Nigerian Electoral Act 2010 put a peg at the limit to which a

The point being established here is that by our estimation, both candidates breached the income and expenditure limits set up in the 2010 Electoral Act. The 2015 presidential election campaigns and elections have come and gone but not without blight: a corruption of the electioneering process as exemplified by political parties' mobilization of huge funds, of questionable sources, to run the campaigns and election. This does not bode well for democracy and an end must come to this blatant commercialization of the electoral process. Campaigns and elections, of course, come with reasonable cost implications but what the country has witnessed in the current dispensation is too much of a shame to stand. In a country struggling for economic survival and where the majority wallows in abject poverty, this phenomenon demands soul-searching among all Nigerians as it calls to question the morality of those seeking to lead the nation.

For instance, the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specified in section 225 (1-6) conditions and scrutiny of the sources of funds and expenses of political parties. Section 225 (3) (a) and (b) as well as 225 (4) forbid political parties from foreign funding of any kind. Section 226 (1-3) demands annual reports of account from political parties. By extension, the Electoral Act (2010) stipulates the ceiling of expenses by candidates and political parties for specific elective positions. The maximum limits are pegged at: N1,000,000,000 (naira) for presidential candidates, N200,000,000 for governorship candidates, and ₦40,000,000 and ₦20,000,000 respectively for Senate and House of Representatives candidates (Eme. 2009). The table below details further on the issues of campaign finance in Nigeria.

**Table 4: Election Expenses Limit**

| <b>Elective Office</b>    | <b>Limit on Election Expenses</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President                 | ₦1,000,000,000                    |
| Governorship              | ₦200,000,000                      |
| Senate                    | ₦40,000,000                       |
| House of Representative   | ₦20,000,000                       |
| State Assembly            | ₦10,000,000                       |
| Local Government Chairman | ₦10,000,000                       |
| Councilors                | ₦1,000,000                        |

**Source: Electoral Act (2010)**

These provisions are necessary to make certain that political parties and candidates are properly guided with regards to the scope of party and election funding and expenses. Additionally, putting a cap on expenses makes certain that the cost of politics remains reasonable and affordable so as to ensure qualitative and quantitative citizen participation. Available evidence which will be discussed subsequently, however, shows that despite these provisions, parties and candidates have continued to infringe on these regulations. Fundraising conducted ahead of the 2015 elections were done without regards to legal provisions (Eme & Okeke,2011) . Campaign expenses, particularly of the two main presidential candidates, overshot the N1 billion limit. Money was illegally used to buy votes and permanent voters cards. State administrative resources were used by incumbent officials to facilitate party activities. Political party primaries became a cash affair to lead to the possible emergence of the highest bidders. Yet, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the regulatory body, is yet to investigate, prosecute and sanction erring parties and candidates for infringements. This has been the case since the transition to democratic governance in 1999 (Olorunmola,2016).

Despite spirited efforts by the PDP to cover up for the campaign funds it raised, their expenditure profile clearly shows that the two main political parties flagrantly flouted laid down laws on campaign financing since they both raised and spent more than N1 billion. The donation of N21 billion to the PDP during its fund raising dinner violated Nigeria’s electoral laws. The individuals and groups who donated also breached the Act since it stipulates that neither individuals nor groups/entity may donate more than N1 million. As it is with the political parties, so it is with the candidates who seek elective offices on the platform of political parties. Their chances are also determined by the amount of money that they are able to raise and spend. In Nigeria, our experience has been that political office holders take loans, borrow money from Godfathers which has to be repaid with interest and at a cost, sell their property if they have any, solicit for money from friends and corporate organisations who are also at best, investors looking for latter-day return on investment. In Oyo state, Lamidi Adedibu fell out with former Governor Rasheed Ladoja because he insisted on a share of the Governor’s security vote. In Anambra state, former Governor Chris Ngige ran into troubled waters because he refused to share privileges with the man that allegedly put him in power().

This commercialization of the political process is a universal dilemma and part of the crisis of what seems to be the perceived end of liberal democracy. If money makes all the difference, and politicians have to acquire and repay monetary IOUs, then where does that leave the big, liberal, ideas about choice, sovereignty and the power of the majority? Where really, are the people in the entire democratic equation? Before the election, on election-day and even after, the electorate at least in Africa, expect to be paid in cash and kind. The people are encouraged to embrace democracy with cash, they are induced to vote in the same manner and their loyalty is maintained only when it is procured. Countries where democracy still seems to be putative or uncertain are the worst hit and many of them are in Africa. But it must be carefully noted that politicians also spend money elsewhere: in France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the United States, Spain, Germany, Italy among others.

For instance, in the run off to the 2003 elections, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate, President Olusegun Obasanjo and his running mate, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, raised over N5.5 billion naira as campaign finances as shown in tables 3 and 6. This amount overwhelmingly exceeded the maximum limits fixed by the 2002 Electoral Act. Similarly, former governors of Delta and Lagos states, James Ibori (PDP) and Bola Tinubu of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), who were the governorship candidates in that same election raised N2.3 billion and N1.3 billion respectively as campaign funds during the 2003 governorship election as captured in tables 5-8 . Also, table 5 indicates that Bukola Saraki (PDP), governorship candidate in Kwara State raised N160 million, while Lucky Igbinedion (PDP) Edo state raised N500 million. Others include the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Na’ Abba (PDP) and his deputy, Chibodom Nwuche (PDP), who raised N150 million and N500 million respectively. Great Ogboru (AD), governorship candidate in Edo state raised N200 million. It should be noted that apart from Saraki and Ogboru, all the other candidates were holding public offices and contesting gubernatorial elections for a second tenure.

**Table 5: Selected Donations to Individual Party Candidates**

| <b>Candidate</b>     | <b>Position</b> | <b>Political Party</b> | <b>Amount (N)</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Obasanjo/Atiku       | President       | PDP                    | N5.5 billion      |
| Governor James Ibori | Governor        | PDP                    | N2.3 billion      |
| Governor Bola Tinubu | Governor        | AD                     | N1.3 billion      |
| Bukola Saraki        | Governor        | PDP                    | N160 million      |
| Great Ogboru         | Governor        | AD                     | N200 million      |
| Lucky Igbenedion     | Governor        | PDP                    | N500 million      |
| Ghali Na’ Abba       | House of Rep    | PDP                    | N150 million      |
| Chibodum Nwuche      | House of Rep    | PDP                    | N500 million      |

Eme, O.I. and Okeke, M.I. (2011). “Nigerian Political Parties, Electoral Reforms and Political Finance: Agenda for Reform”, *The Constitution*, Vol. 11, No 2 (June) Pp 87-115.

**Table 6: List of Contributors to James Ibori Governorship Campaign**

| <b>Contributors</b>                                      | <b>Amount</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Vice President Atiku Abubakar                            | N34 million   |
| Michael Ibru (On behalf of Ibru family and friends       | N250 million  |
| Mr. Peter Okocha (on behalf of Delta North Professionals | N200 million  |
| Chief Michael Oki  | N200 million  |
| Olorugun John Oguma                                      | N120 million  |
| Chief Mike Omeruah                                       | N120 million  |
| Chief Newton Jibunor                                     | N100 million  |
| Chief Nam Okechukwu                                      | N100 million  |
| Alhaji Inuwa Umoru                                       | N100 million  |
| Bube Okorodudu   | N10 million   |
| Mr. Tony Anenih Jnr on behalf of friends of Ibori        | N50 million   |
| Chief Emeka Offor  | N5 million    |
| Anonymous Donor  | N35 million   |
| Mr. Terry Wayas  | N35 million   |
| Austin Odili   | N30 million   |
| Chief Tony Anenih, Chief Lucky Igbiniedion and others    | N26 million   |
| Zenith Bank  | N25 million   |
| Mr Wale Tinubu   | N20 million   |
| Alhaji Abdulrazaq Abdulraham                             | N10 million   |
| Chief Diepreye Alamieyesiegha                            | N10 million   |
| Akintola Williams  | N10 million   |
| Core Group   | N10 million   |
| Chief Tom Ikimi boat worth                               | N7 million    |
| Chief Edwin Clarke on behalf of Ijaws of Delta           | N5 million    |
| Delta State House of Assembly                            | N6 million    |

Eme, O.I. and Okeke, M.I. (2011). "Nigerian Political Parties, Electoral Reforms and Political Finance: Agenda for Reform", *The Constitution*, Vol. 11, No 2 (June) Pp 87-115.

**Table 7: List of Contributors to Bola Tinubu Governorship Campaign**

| <b>Contributors</b>                                     | <b>Amount</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Mr. Wale Tinubu   | N100 million  |
| The Governor's friend                                   | N150 million  |
| The Deputy Governor's friends                           | N76 million   |
| Femi Otedola, M.D of Zenon Oil & Gas                    | N10 million   |
| Prince Albert Awofisayo, Continental Pharmaceutical Ltd | N10 million   |
| Chief Remi Adiakwu Bakare                               | N10 million   |
| Chief Ayoku, the Babalaje of Lagos                      | N10 million   |
| Alhaji and Alhaji K.O Tinubu and children               | N10 million   |
| Friends of the Lagos State Executive Secretaries        | N10 million   |
| Senator Tokunbo Afikoyumi                               | N5 million    |
| Mrs. Stela Okoli  | N5 million    |
| Lady Joy Udensi   | N10 million   |
| Friends of Lagos State Permanent Secretaries            | N2 million    |
| The Tinubu family                                       | N1 million    |
| Chief Abiodun Kasamu                                    | N1 million    |

Eme, O.I. and Okeke, M.I. (2011). "Nigerian Political Parties, Electoral Reforms and Political Finance: Agenda for Reform", *The Constitution*, Vol. 11, No 2 (June) Pp 87-115.

According to recent studies and investigations by *Punch* Newspapers(2015), a large percentage of the crowd that turn up at election campaign rallies held by political parties for elections across Nigeria are usually rented and each of these people are paid between N500 and N5,000. From the *Punch* report, it was seen that the amount paid depends on the profile of the event, the distance of the venue and the caliber of people engaged. The Peoples' Democratic Party, All Progressives Congress, as well as other smaller parties have been making claims, especially on social media, that the huge crowd that turn up at their campaigns was a proof of their popularity. It was, however, learnt that women and youth groups, as well as 'elders' are hired in Akwa Ibom, Oyo, Abia and various other states. Quoting *Punch* Newspaper sources,

...If you observe, you will see that those who attend PDP rallies and campaigns are often mobilised at the end of the event, where they are given between N200 and N2000 each. The amount each person receives depends on the groups they belong. An Eket-based woman, Ms. Ikwo Edet, said she was paid N500 after the last political rally she attended in Uyo. In Umuahia, Abia State, another source revealed that unemployed youths, students of both secondary and tertiary institutions, tricycle and motorcycle riders, as well as traders form the category of individuals easily rented. The rent ranges from N500 to N3000, depending on the category of the individual and the importance of the political rally. Confirming this, a tricycle driver, said he did not belong to any political party but was ready to be hired by any party that could pay his charges. Similarly, in Enugu State, students are a major population hired for political rally whenever the need arises through contact persons (Rewaju, 2015).

It was a similar case in Bayelsa State, where parties reach out to youth and women groups in the local governments area for mobilisation. A regular participant in such rallies, Ms. Ebilami Victor, who hails from Ekeremor area of the state, said she usually took part in such activity because it was the only way to make money. According to her, *It depends on where the campaign is taking place. If it is within the local government area, each participant is usually paid between N1500 and N2000. But if it is Yenagoa, the state capital, we are paid N3000. But when it is outside the state, each person is paid between N2000 and N5000* (Rewaju, 2015).

In Oyo State, there is a network through which crowds are gathered for political purposes. The ring is run by a women and men group, it was learnt. Youths in Ondo State are also having a swell time attending political rallies organised by parties and candidates ahead of the elections. A party member, who gave his name as Adedeji, who attended a Social Democratic Party rally in Akure, told one of *Punch* correspondents that each 'supporter' engaged by one of the candidates received N2, 500 to attend the rally. Another supporter, an unemployed, who identified himself simply as Makinde, told our correspondent that he received N1000 to attend the rally.

In Cross River State, political parties have resorted to contracting the job of hiring crowd to individuals or groups within the party. Depending on the venue of the rally, the task of mobilising at least 1000 persons spread across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state could cost between N800,000 and N1m. In the ruling PDP, one of such mobilisers, who preferred not to be named, said his last task of hiring 300 persons to a rally at the central senatorial district cost N1m. In the case of Edo State, many of the supporters, who are predominantly youths, are sourced from both within the state and from neighbouring states and can get N1,500 or N2,000, for transportation or feeding (Rewaju, 2015).

Adding to the debate, the vast nature of the polity is increasing the cost of democracy in Nigeria. Like American elections which are equally expensive because America is a big, rich country: reaching a population of 314m costs a lot, particularly in competitive media markets such as New York and Florida. Also, each election cycle features thousands of contests. A report, published by SERAP(2015), put the combined spending of the PDP and the APC on political adverts alone at the sum of N3.23 billion on

political campaign advertisements. PDP's spending was put at about N2.5 billion (77 per cent) while that of the APC was put at N728 million (23 per cent).

According to the report, the media advertisements were placed on radio, television, press and billboards for the PDP and the APC presidential campaigns between December 2014 and March 2015. The report was said to have been unveiled after a thorough analysis of over 260 broadcast media (radio and television), 48 print (newspapers and magazines) media and over 1,000 outdoor billboards across the country. The Report which focused on the two main political parties, taking into cognizance the nation's geographical zones, the advertising campaigns of the different political parties, individuals and groups in support of the presidential candidates. Perhaps it was as a result of this huge investment in campaign financing that former President Jonathan, following his woeful defeat, reportedly asked the party (PDP) and government officials who had handled campaign funds to refund monies not spent, or those not judiciously expended. While this aspects of the spending could be traced and roughly estimated, there is no record for the amount spent on underhand dealings, which are most likely far more than the traceable amounts. The two figures combined make politics in Nigeria a very expensive venture and that of 2019 could only get higher.

### **Benefits of High Cost of Presidential Democracy**

But the benefit of political stability and its returns far outstrips the expense of these exercises. The cost of transitions may be high, but the guarantees of political freedom, inclusion, respect for the rule of law, equality, protection of human rights etc. cannot be over-estimated in democracies. Apart from providing protective limits, these guarantees send a loud message to investors and other development partners as well. Any attempt to understate the benefits of democratically held elections is respectfully, therefore, a myopic perspective.

Democratic elections also reduce the tensions in opposition elements to try to usurp power. This is because they are guaranteed an opportunity to compete with the ruling party for the general mandate of the people come elections. Democratic governments also provide checks and balances against abuse of power and state resources. Even though we must hasten to say, that from what is happening in many countries, this guarantee is not always assured. Progresses made under democracies are more sustainable because they are achieved by consensus and the participation of all stakeholders. In dictatorships, progress made can unravel when the object of fear, the ruler, is removed. Therefore, for the safeguarding of rights and freedoms, for the protection of the public purse and the general reduction in the number of insurrections, Nigeria is better off operating an imperfect but highly effective leadership structure of democracy than to accept the high risk of dictatorial rule.

### **CONCLUSION**

The role of political parties in a democracy is uncontested. Indeed, representative democracy cannot operate without political parties. Political parties are the instruments for the conduct of elections in a democracy. They serve as the mobilizing force for elections in a multi-party democracy. However, there is no doubt that the maintenance of effective political parties in between elections, and campaign financing during elections, are increasingly becoming expensive projects. Competitive elections have increased the cost of running effective political parties. Political parties must mobilize funds in order to execute the numerous functions they perform in democratic dispensations. Various research findings have confirmed that funding remains the major challenge in running effective political parties. Yet parties' funding sources have been under public scrutiny plagued by suspicion of corruption. This study looked at high cost of democracy and its implications for election management, electoral financing, and electoral laws in Nigeria. The 2015 Presidential election was used as a case-study. The data for this study was generated from documentary sources. Tables and the technique of content analysis constituted our data analysis technique. Findings revealed that candidates seeking nominations for elective positions are willing to invest large amounts of money to become their party flag bearers and this distorts internal democracy and electoral laws governing elections. As a result, electoral management body has limited enforceability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of this paper, we suggest the following recommendations:

In Nigeria, the framework governing political campaign finance is the Electoral Act and the 1999 Constitution. According to Section 91(2) and 91(3) of the Electoral Act, the maximum election expenses to be incurred by a candidate at a presidential and governorship election shall be one billion Naira only and two hundred million Naira only respectively. Also, Section 91(4) of the Electoral Act states that the maximum election expenses to be incurred by a candidate for a Senatorial and House of Representatives election shall be forty million Naira only and twenty million Naira only respectively. Independent political campaign finance experts have frequently noted that Nigeria's president, governors, senators and members of the House of Representatives spent much more than the amount allowed by the Electoral Act. The implication is that the campaign finance laws in Nigeria are not in tune with the realities on ground. While there is need to advocate for a reduction in the amount of money spent by politicians and political parties, there is also need to review the electoral realities and laws in Nigeria. The maximum amount of money that a candidate is legally allowed to spend in an election should be reviewed upwards. This recommendation is based on observed realities that are necessary to mount a solid electoral campaign. However, the upward review should not be contained in the Electoral Act. Rather, the Electoral Act should be amended such that the power to decide the maximum legally allowable amounts is vested on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The justification for this is the need to avoid the lengthy rigors of legislation whenever there is need for an urgent change in the maximum legally allowable amount of expenditure. Based on changes in economic indicators, INEC will be allowed to exercise this power from time to time after consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Some of the empirical factors for consideration include cost of media advertisements, cost of campaign venue, transport cost, land area and number of voters to be reached, etc. Section 91(10) of the Electoral Act states the penalties for violating campaign finance laws, however, these penalties are too petty and not strong enough to serve as deterrents. The penalties should be increased to a fine of not less than 50% of the excess expenditure, a prison term of not less than three calendar years and debarment from political offices for a period of not less than five years. The Electoral Act should be amended to make media outfits under obligation to report the cost of all campaign advertisements to INEC. Companies must be banned from making donations to political campaign finance of candidates and parties while donations by ordinary Nigerian citizens should be made tax deductible so long as it is within the maximum legally allowed amount of donations by an individual. In terms of disciplinary powers, INEC should not be a toothless bulldog. This election cost tax payable by every adult of voting age. Evidence of payment must be required before citizens can access critical social services. The fund should be administered in such ways to partly subsidise costs of election administration.

Again, there is the need for legislation to promote volunteers' role in the electoral process, but community assets, such as in the areas of provision of canopies, voter education, transportation and mobilisation should continue to be tapped and documented. A collective ownership of the electoral process by all stakeholders is key to election cost reduction. The courts and even INEC should continue to adopt liberal interpretations of laws/regulations guiding electoral process, with a view to prompting active participation of citizens. INEC should be bold to take its rightful position as the umpire of election in Nigeria, by expressing its determination to curb any act of impunity and ensure the stakeholders respected the rule of law. The electoral body should be bold to cancel any election or electoral process which it felt failed to meet its stipulated standard or compromised along the line without any bias. We recommended that the parties and individuals that violate the electoral should be sanctioned and the law needs to be reviewed to promote enforceability. We conclude by positing that the ongoing war against corruption may not yield the desired results until we reform Nigeria's political and campaign finance laws and policies. Beyond legal and policy reform, we also need to implement the reformed laws to the letter.

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