

Corruption, Electoral Process and Insecurity in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Elections serve the purpose of selecting leaders according to the rules and regulations of societies. It provides the opportunities for the smooth transfer of political power from one administration to the other, and from groups to groups thereby ensuring political and socio-economic stability in societies. Unfortunately, the electoral process in Nigeria has been characterized with election malpractices which are majorly perpetuated by the ruling elites who want to remain in power at all cost and by all means. This is made manifest in vote-buying, bribing of electoral officials to manipulate election results, ballot stuffing, ballot boxes snatching, intimidation e.t.c. Electoral corruption has continued to increase from one election to the other just as much as the incidence of electoral violence which often lead to tension and anxiety during and after elections. The paper examined corrupt practices among politicians, voters and the electoral body officials as it impact negatively on the security of lives and property in the Nigerian polity. It adopted the elite theory as its theoretical framework and also used secondary data for its analysis. It concluded that incidences of political violence during and after elections in Nigeria have always led to loss of lives and property. The paper also suggested among others, re-orientation of Nigerians to see elective office as a position to hold power and resources in trust for the citizens and not as a means of wealth acquisition; and corrupt acts/practices should be handled as criminal offences with severe punishment.

KEYWORDS: Election, corruption, electoral process, insecurity.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of Nigerian fourth republic on 29th May, 1999, several elections have been conducted to afford Nigerians the opportunity to choose their political leaders. However, the credibility of these elections has always been in doubt because of the incidences of electoral corruption which have characterised our electoral politics. Electoral corruption are made manifest in, but not limited to, ballot stuffing, ballot boxes snatching, vote-buying, buying of party agents for rigging of elections, bribing of security personnel and electoral officials to alter results and rigging of election results. All these are majorly perpetuated by some rich and powerful politicians who either want to be in power or want their 'political god children' in office. This is because political power has been conceived in Nigeria as enhancing economic power. Thus, individuals or political parties go to any extent, using any means to attain this power (the former) and when they could not achieve their aim, violence emerged with its resultant effect of loss of lives and property. Barely all elections conducted during this present republic have been characterized by different forms of violence owing to the fact that the electoral body has compromised the sanctity/credibility of the electoral processes. This is made manifest in late arrival of election materials at polling units, shortage of election materials, late commencement of polling, voting outside stipulated period, omission of candidates' names on ballot boxes e.t.c. This paper examined incidences of corruption as they affect the electoral process negatively with its attendant results which have eroded the security of the Nigerian political system.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Election

The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines election as the process of selecting the officers/representatives of an organization or group by the votes of its qualified members (Akzin, 1960). It serves to ensure mass participation of the citizens in the process of choosing their representatives both in the legislature and the executive. Elections (periodic, free and fair) are also seen as necessary for achieving the goal of democratization, but on their own, they are insufficient for achieving the goal of democratization. Election can also contribute to the maintenance /breakdown of the democratic system. This is so when elections are

conducted in an atmosphere that encourages the manipulation of the electoral process. For example, the 1993 presidential election with its annulment contributed to the breakdown of the polity and, in fact, became a source of political instability (Omotoso, 2002:63). Anifowose (2003:24) summarized the roles played by elections to include recruiting politicians and public decision-makers; making governments; influencing policy decisions; educating voters; building legitimacy; strengthening elites; providing succession in leadership; and engendering mass political participation.

Corruption

According to Transparency International (2013) corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. It also refers to any behavior that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the action of someone in position of public trust or authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or status (Onuigbo, 2015 cited in Oluwatusin, 2019:65). Corruption takes the form of the following: bribery, nepotism, extortion, gratification, absenteeism from work, misappropriation, embezzlement and stealing or looting, falsification of official records, inflation of contract value, diversion of funds and ghost workforce (Markson, 2017). According to ICPC Act [section2], corruption includes vices, like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Our concern in this paper is electoral corruption which has become a major characteristic of Nigerian politics. Politicians offer money to the electorate to buy their votes; voters collect money to sell their votes to the highest bidder and politicians also offer bribe to the electoral officials in order to alter election results to their advantage. Thus, electoral corruption can be described as all actions or inactions of individuals, groups or institutions which encourage the manipulation/subversion of electoral process either by words, media, thugs, violence, money and state apparatus aimed at getting undue advantage for oneself or political party.

Electoral Process

Electoral process can be viewed as the way or method by which elections are conducted in a political system in order to choose those who will occupy elective positions. The common elements of electoral processes include the legal framework for elections, an accurate and complete voters' register, campaign period, voting process, counting of votes and collation of results, announcement of results, election petitions and presentation of certificate of return to winners. The electoral process in the country is being handled by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Insecurity

Insecurity can be described as a state of uncertainty, a lack of self-confidence and the state of being subject to danger and vulnerability. Also it is the state or condition of being weak or poorly defended; a state of being unable to protect lives and property. There are various types of insecurity which includes job insecurity, food insecurity political insecurity, economic insecurity, religious insecurity, social insecurity e.t.c.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Elite Theory is adopted for this paper as the framework of analysis and this theory has been developed by Gaetano Mosca, Wilfredo Pareto, Robert Michels and Ortega Gasset as a complement to conflict theory and pluralism. Being deep-rooted in classical Sociology, elite theory is very much concerned with structures, especially authority structure. The concept of elites is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources. However, elite theory limits elites to a necessary minority, who can effectively manage democratic institutions, accumulate the privileges that come with power, orchestrate mass support and protect their positions by controlling access to the top. Thus, the elites though, few are left to dominate the decision making process while the masses though large in number are apathetic. Summarily, according to Mosca, elite theory points to the concentration of political power in the hands of a minority group which "performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings" (cited in Oluwatusin & Daisi, 2018:92). Thus, public policy may be viewed as the value and preferences of governing elites and this is why they want to remain in power by all means. The elite theory is relevant in understanding corruption as it is being used by the elites to manipulate the electoral process in order to remain in power.

IV. CAUSES OF ELECTORAL CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Corruption is one of the socio-economic malaises which are bedeviling Nigeria and has negatively impacted on effective service delivery. Electoral corruption has also permeated Nigerian politics over time that it has made the electoral process to be fraudulent. Different arguments have been put forward to explain the pervasiveness of corruption in the country. One of these is that Nigerians do not see public property as our property rather it is perceived as government property. Owing to this, looting of public property was not seen as a crime against the society. This is why bureaucratic and political corruption has been pervasive in the system.

Another factor that breeds corruption is personalization of public office. Nigerians view appointment as a means to private advancement. The electorate even expects public office holders to use their office for financial and material benefits. Corroborating this, Dudley (1973:20) observes:

.... The shortest cut to affluence and influence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics, there is always a price.... To be a member of the government party means an open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the like.

Moreover, a very important factor that encourages corruption among our political leaders is the high cost of party nomination forms. In some cases, contestants have had to obtain loans to enable them to contest elections thus, turning it into a business venture rather than a call to public service. When such contestants eventually win, their ultimate goal is to make money as quickly as possible to repay their debt and enrich their pockets. In a similar vein, the high cost of obtaining nomination forms encourages the emergence of godfathers with their noxious influence on politics and governance (The Punch, 2020:28). According to the reports, the Expression of Interest Form by each APC candidate attracted #2.5 million, while a Nomination Form went for #20 million per governorship candidate. On the other hand, both categories attracted #1 million and #20 million respectively in the PDP (ibid.). Prospective candidates who could not afford the amount to obtain the nomination forms do seek sponsorship from wealthy politicians who would in turn want to control the godsons/state resources and the godsons will also want to repay the godfathers with juicy contracts and political appointments. This could result in the situation that played out in Anambra and Oyo states in 2003 when the then governor of the latter was abducted and forced to resign by his godfather (Chris Uba) and that of the former who was impeached by his godfather (Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu) though was later reinstated by the judiciary (Oluwatusin.2007:189).

In addition to this, is the poverty of the mind which makes some Nigerians accumulate so much more than they actually need. Thus, the elites with their insatiable appetite for more are rich in their pockets and accounts but poor in their minds. They consume their portion and the portions of their children and go abroad to assail the sensibilities of the less privileged Nigerians with their ostentatious display of wealth. Their greed breeds universal poverty and lures the lowly official of state into exploiting his own little position for personal advantage (Adedokun, 2018:21). Not that only, this also lures the electorate into selling their votes and making themselves tools in the hands of the wealthy politicians to manipulate/compromise the electoral process which ultimately consolidate bad governance.

The electoral process has also contributed a lot to entrenching corruption in the political system in that it continues to produce corrupt elected leaders whose aim is to use public offices to serve their benefits. Other factors that breed corruption in Nigeria include but not limited to; poverty, poor condition of work, weak political institutions, inefficient standard of contract awards, nepotism and tribalism in the administration of justice, greed and inadequate accountability mechanism.

V. ELECTORAL PROCESS AND INTEGRITY

Electoral process has been at the centre of various crises that had truncated democratic experiments in Nigeria since independence to date. The collapse of the First and Second Republics (1966 and 1983) was as a result of manipulations of electoral processes which marred the integrity of elections and the democratic governance. Thus electoral integrity is the foundation of democratic stability. Electoral process which allows for the expression of the popular will of the people is referred to as electoral integrity. Electoral integrity is a situation whereby all the necessary processes taken before, during and after elections are seen to be fair, transparent and trustworthy (Amuwo, 2009). Thus, electoral integrity can be conceptualized as a situation where all electoral processes are devoid of any form of partisan political manipulations that could create doubt and suspicion in the minds of the people about the outcome or result of an election.

Electoral integrity is therefore the pivot of democratic governance. When people have expressed their popular will (through election of candidates of their choice) and such will is upheld by the electoral body without upturning the will of the people, then we have electoral integrity. The credibility or otherwise of an election is therefore depends on the integrity of the electoral process. It is observed that the truthfulness of the Nigerian voting structures has been severally violated in both procedural management and administration which truncate the conduct of free, fair and credible elections to the background.

To this end Annan (2013) observed that when citizens go to the polls to cast their votes they aspire not only to elect their leaders but also choose a direction for their nation. Hence he warned that while election with integrity can bolster democracy, flawed elections can undermine it which may invariably threaten the stability of the polity through the attendant violent actions.

VI. LEVELS OF CORRUPTION IN ELECTORAL PROCESS IN NIGERIA

Corruption and corrupt practices in the Nigerian electoral process take place at different levels and in varying degrees in the Nigerian electoral process. Following this development, the multi-dimensionality of corruption and its amorphous nature takes place at various levels and stages in the Nigerian electoral process. The various levels of corruption in the electoral process in Nigeria include:

- i. party primaries and nomination level,
- ii. governmental level, and
- iii. electorate level. Each of these levels will be examined with their attendant consequences on electoral integrity.

6.1 Corruption at the Party Level

It is important to note that political democracy starts at the party level. Political parties are conceived as a central feature of any modern democracy. They are the vehicles by which citizens come together freely to campaign for public office and win seats in a legislative body, to express their interests and needs, and define their aspirations for their society. Democracy can only exist and thrive where parties play their critical – even unique – roles in politics (NDI, 2008).

It is at the political party level that the various processes of electoral integrity and credibility begin. Thus, the possession of a free, fair and credible election depends on the extent of existence of internal democracy at the party level. At this level in Nigeria, political godfatherism has destroyed internal democracy. This is the beginning of corrupt practices in the political process. At the party level, political godfathers use their ill-gotten wealth to lure, intimidate and manipulate members of the party executives and impose unpopular candidates. The proposal by the then President Goodluck Jonathan seeking to allow party caucuses to produce delegates at conventions according to Akeredolu (2010) showed that internal democracy at the party level have been scuttled, and that is the beginning of election rigging and corruption at the party level.

Thus, Izenwa (2007) observed that corruption at the party level emanates from the activities of godfathers which have crippled democratic choice and consequently shrinks democratic space. He further noted that the activities of godfathers create serious electoral problems as they employ all forms of obnoxious means to win elections. Acknowledging the absence of internal democracy at the party level, President Jonathan in his broadcast to the nation on Democracy Day May 29, 2010, remarked that “for the parties to be relevant in the nation’s democratic enterprise, it is compulsory that a regime of internal party democracy must be in all the parties, adding that “it is the political parties that are imbued with democratic spirit that would deepen the practice of democracy in our land”. This is an indication that many political parties in Nigeria (including his party PDP) do not put in internal democracy in place in their parties.

Corruption at the party level has made democratic process and electoral integrity difficult in the Nigerian political process, especially since the nation returned to civil rule in 1999. This corruption emanates from material and mental poverty, greed, avarice and ignorance on the part of these party members. The trio, that is poverty, greed and ignorance have brought about the emergence of such citizens that prefer money to their conscience to the extent that they cannot whimper even when their democratic rights are subverted. That is why Ogundiya (2010) examined that one major development in recent years is that political parties in Nigeria have become “disabilities to democratic stability”. Hence, party procedures for appointment /selection of candidates are usually scuttled and non-transparent due to manipulations of political godfathers who take over party affairs.

Poverty, greed and ignorance have made the political godfathers to impose any candidate of their choice on the party members thereby subverting democratic rights of members and they go to any length to circumvent the rules of the game to ensure their candidates win. Reports had it that a former Secretary to the Government of Ondo State, Mr. Sunday Abegunde has publicly revealed that the Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu did not win the 2016 governorship elections but they (APC) made it possible for him to become governor (The Punch, July 7, 2020:15). This state of affairs was very dominant during 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 party primary elections in Nigeria. Examples include the imposition of late President Yaradua on members of the PDP and Nigerians by former President Obasanjo during the 2007 general elections, Chief Andy Uba as the PDP governorship candidate of Anambra State 2007, and a host of others. A recent instance readily comes to mind in the 2019 Governorship elections in Lagos State where a sitting Governor was not allowed to contest for a second term by the godfather of Lagos politics, (Bola Tinubu) and the APC ticket was given to Babajide Sanwo-Olu. The corruption at the party level therefore constitutes a great setback to democratic process and party internal democracy. In the 2019 general elections, elections were largely driven money and power and these were wielded by politicians and political parties. Votes were openly bought as if people were in the open market.

6.2 Corruption at the Governmental Level

If your hands are dirty, you lose moral authority and the right and conscience to do justice.

Public office is a trust and betrayal of that trust in any way or manner makes the public office-holder a traitor to the course and interest of the people. Official corruption is defined as situation where an official abuses one's office for personal or group (financial) gains or purposes. It is the most destructive factor in the electoral process in Nigeria. Official corruption is a crime in Nigeria under the criminal code. As Jega (2007) reiterated, the more public and elected officials demonstrate irresponsibility, seem unaccountable and insensitive to popular demands and aspirations, and the more poorly they conduct themselves in governance and state-craft, the greater the threats to democratic strengthening and sustainability. Yet, officials are involved in corruption with impunity, thus constituting impediment to electoral integrity.

The major officials connected with elections in Nigeria are the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the federal level, State Independent National Electoral Commission (SIEC) at the State and Local Government levels; the security operatives such as the Police, Department of State Service (DSS), and the Army (in some cases). These various officials are supposed to conduct and monitor elections and ensure that all the necessary rules and procedures are not only observed but followed to the letter. However, the operations of these official agencies in Nigeria in electoral processes have been beclouded with corrupt practices of all sorts. They had always been accused of involvement in various levels of compromise; some of the ad hoc INEC officials take bribe to manipulate election results and the acts of inducement take place right before security agents (Adetayo, 2020:3); and in some instances, the security agents are used to militarise the polling units to scare voters away which would allow the political parties/electoral officials to manipulate the elections. The corrupt practices of government officials persist. According to Akeredolu (2010), lack of punishment for electoral offenders in such capacity is responsible. Unless and until punishments are meted out to official electoral offenders, corruption at official level will not stop as election time will be seen as big business/time "to make" through fraudulent electoral activities, such activities manifested in various local government elections in the country.

6.3 Corruption at the Electorate Level

According to Obasanjo (1999), corruption is incipient in all human societies and in most activities. The irony about electoral process and integrity in Nigeria is that election period is always seen by the electorate as the time and avenue for the masses to "obtain their booties" from the politicians. Consequently, election period becomes a time when many of the Nigerian masses, especially the youth will begin to scramble for money from members of the political class. Because of this singular belief that the masses must get their own "share" of the national cake from the politicians, the mindset of an average Nigerian voter is not tilted towards political ideology of development but rather on what share he/she would get from the political class to deliver his constituency, ward, or polling unit to the favoured political party. Since the focus of the majority of the masses is how to corruptly enrich themselves through the election, many of them now become agents of electoral malpractices with the politicians. Thus, massive rigging, snatching of ballot boxes, multiple voting etc are committed by the electorate to satisfy the interest one political party/politician or the other thereby "selling and betraying" the constituency, ward or community. With the foregoing, there is an obvious lack of decisiveness on the part of the electorates to ensure electoral integrity.

Consequently, both elites and the electorate become indifferent to electoral malpractices. This state of affairs has created fertile ground for electoral corruption. Corruption at the electorate level emanates mostly because of poverty and ignorance occasioned by illiteracy. Because of the ignorance and low level of literacy of the masses many of them do not know what constitutes their political rights. Consequently, they see political activities and electoral processes as the activity that belongs to only a particular group of people (the elites). Capitalizing on the ignorance of the masses, the political class always manipulates the electorate by throwing around the ill-gotten money from the much they have siphoned from the public treasury, thereby causing "divide and rule" among the masses and creating confusion and commotions in the polity. Due to lack of knowledge, they were being made to "sell" their votes for any party and mortgage their future and that of their generation yet unborn. That is why the proposition by many scholars and pro-democrats for the protection of votes does not seem to make meaning to majority of the electorate. They sell their votes to the highest bidder as witnessed in 2015 and 2019 general elections.

Again, the development of political thuggery is a by-product of corruption at the electorate level. Thugs are generally selected from among the electorate and particularly from the youths and able-bodied with low-mental/social background which is the resultant effect of bad governance. For the reason of their mental bankruptcy, they see thuggery as the only way for them to attain position and amass wealth. Thus, many of them can stake their lives to protect the interest of their principal. Gun wielding thugs do shot sporadically into the air to scare away INEC officials, adhoc staff, party agents and fellow electorate during elections. They are the ones involved in ballot snatching, stuffing of ballot boxes, intimidation of opponents and other election malpractices

to suit the politicians. Thuggery has always led to violence before, during and after elections resulting to loss of lives and property especially to many families among the lowly placed Nigerians while their political masters continue to blossom with their children, and recycle them in political offices.

VII. CAUSES OF INSECURITY

Drawing copiously from existing literature on insecurity in Nigeria, the causes of insecurity within Nigeria is twofold: remote and proximate causes. The remote factors include such causes as the following.

a) Absence of Institutional Capacity Resulting in Government Failure. The foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very shaky and have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralysing the existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order (Achumba, *et al*, 2013). This view is collaborated by Igbuzor (2011) who sees the state of insecurity in Nigeria as a function of government failure. This manifests in the incapacity of government to deliver public goods to its citizens. This lack of basic necessities by the Nigerian people has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation or opportunity. Although Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, the entrenched culture of corruption in public service has resulted in the dearth of basic necessities, leading to what Hazen & Horner (2007) call a “Paradox of Plenty”. Because of this situation, the crime rate shoots up and the security of lives and property are no longer guaranteed.

b) Inequality and Absence of Fairness and Justice

The perception of marginalisation by many Nigerians is informed by the ostentation showed by the political class and elite vis-à-vis the grinding poverty to which citizens are subjected. Even security has been bourgeoisified by the elite. As Egwu (2000) contends, the security of the Nigerian nation-state has been reduced to that of the ruler and his immediate supporters, thus, the security calculus of the Nigerian state has failed because it does not include vital aspects of social and national development supported by the provision of basic social, economic or even military conditions necessary for effective national security. This state of inequality, unfairness and injustice has toughened the people, forcing them to take their destiny into their hands.

c) Ethno-Religious Conflicts

Ethno-religious conflicts have been identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002; Hazen & Horner, 2007; Salawu, 2010; Igbuzor, 2011). Ethno-religious conflicts exist when the social relations between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multiethnic and multi-religious society is characterised by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontations to settle grievances. These conflicts have also revolved around who gets what and how in the state especially as it concerns the distribution of scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy titles, local government councils, control of markets and expansion of religious territories. These conflicts have resulted in large-scale killings and violence among ethno-religious groups in the country (Adagba, *et al*, 2012).

d) Disconnect between the People and Government

Over the years, there has been a growing disconnect between the people and government Governments, whether military or civilian, have not tried to bridge this chasm, thus creating misunderstanding, mistrust and resentment. Consequently, because the people do not understand government or have a perception that government does not care about their welfare, they become easy prey to centrifugal forces who co-opt/incite them to vent their anger on perceived enemies of the people and sometimes go to the extent of destroying national totems.

e) Weak and Poorly Funded Military Establishments

In spite of the high security vote state governments receive on a monthly basis, there is greater insecurity in many states. Some of these monies find their way into the pockets of some highly-placed private citizens and the Chief Executives of the states, leaving the hapless citizens to the mercy of criminals and sociopaths. Also the armed forces, paramilitary establishments and the police under federal control are weak institutionally, heavily politicised and poorly funded. This status quo makes it easy for the nation's security to be compromised.

g) Non-Prosecution of Perpetrators of Violence in Nigeria

The lack of arrest and prosecution of perpetrators and sponsors of violence has encouraged many more social deviants and their godfathers to throw caution to the wind to perpetrate evil in the land. The Nigerian society has become a rigout of powerful fiefdoms controlled by feudal lords who are almost as powerful as the state and maintain a rental economy within the larger national economy.

VIII. SELECTED AREAS OF NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES

In existence are copious literature materials that chronicle elaborate case studies of insecurity in the country from different informed prisms (see Achumba *et al*, 2013; Adagba *et al*, 2012; Adesoji, 2010; Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002; Igbuzor, 2011; Imhonopi & Urin, 2012; Mijah, 2005; Nwagboso, 2012; Nwolise, 2006; Ogundiya, 2009; Ogundiya & Amzat, 2006; Okafor, 2011). This study will not duplicate such efforts but will single out selected cases of insecurity in the country. Some of these security challenges have been briefly highlighted as follows.

a) The Niger Delta Crisis

According to Nwagboso (2012), the Niger Delta conflict arose in the early 1990s due to tensions between international oil companies (IOCs) and some representatives of Niger Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited without due compensation from the IOCs (Osungade, 2008). Thus,

ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted despite the enthronement of democracy in 1999. However, competition for oil wealth in the region gave rise to agitations, violence and subsequent extra-judicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine Ogoni leaders by the Abacha regime (Urim, 1999). This extra-judicial killing of Ogoni leaders by the Abacha regime was condemned both within the country and by the international community. This was followed by sanctions placed on Nigeria during the period. As Nwagboso (2012) observed, the inability or failure of the government, particularly during the military era, to address the root causes of the agitation (environmental problems, poverty, unemployment, lack of basic amenities, etc.), in the Niger Delta region, resulted in the spawning of ethnic militias of Niger Delta origin leading to the militarisation of nearly the entire region. Thus, the foundation was laid for the wave of insecurity that beleaguered the entire region and spread throughout the tentacles of power. Although in order to ameliorate the environmental degradation and the absolute poverty in place, the government established some institutions or agencies to douse the tension in the area such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of Niger Delta (MND); these intervention remedies, notwithstanding, the conflicts and insecurity in the Niger Delta region persisted.

In fact, the region witnessed severe security threats and the emergence of other agitating groups affiliated to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) like the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom.

b) Kidnapping in the South-East Zone of Nigeria

The history of kidnapping in the South-East zone of Nigeria could be traced to hostilities, conflicts and violence in the Niger Delta region (Nwagboso, 2012). Kidnapping, which is the act of abducting somebody and keeping him/her as a prisoner in order to get a ransom for his/her release, suddenly took on a whole new economic attraction in the South-East of Nigeria. This new black economy thrived in the South-East zone, especially in Abia and Imo states, where prominent indigenes and residents of the states were easy targets. Following the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, this social problem became virulent in the South-East as youths that were used as political thugs by politicians during the 2007 general elections subsequently diverted their guns, skills and energy into the ugly trade as a new means of economic survival after the elections. As Nwagboso (2010) noted, confessions by those apprehended indicated that some politicians in these states supplied guns to youths for the purpose of rigging the 2007 general elections. Unfortunately these guns were not retrieved at the end of the elections.

Consequently, kidnapping transmuted into a profitable business mostly among the youths in Abia, Imo, Ebonyi and other states in the zone. Thus, from 2007 to 2010, several prominent residents and indigenes in Abia and its environs were kidnapped for ransom. This adversely affected the economy of Abia state as many businessmen and manufacturing companies relocated to other states like Enugu and Anambra. Kidnappers went as far as abducting school children, traditional rulers, and innocent citizens while attending church services or village meetings. This has been spread to other parts of the country.

d) The Boko Haram

This is another major security challenge in Nigeria which has adversely affected the Nigerian economy. According to Olugbode (2010), the word "Boko" is a Hausa word meaning "Animist", "western", otherwise non-islamic education; and the Arabic word "Haram" figuratively means "sin" or literally something "forbidden". The Boko Haram is a controversial Nigerian militant Islamist group that has sought to impose Sharia law or its radical interpretation of Islam on the northern states of Nigeria and then to other parts of the country like what the Malians Islamists almost succeeded to do in Northern Mali. Dunia (2010) rightly holds that the group opposes not only western education, but also western culture and modern science. The ambiguous goal of the group (and this point to their level of education) became evident when they kicked against the widely held opinions that the world is sphere and that rain comes from water evaporated by the sun (Nwagboso, 2012). The Boko Haram group also promotes a radical form of Islam which makes it "haram" or forbidden for Muslims to take part in any political or social activities in the society.

IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are close links among the trio- corruption, electoral process and insecurity in Nigeria. The rabid desire of the political class for illicit wealth and sharp deviation from electioneering promises lead to the compromise of the electoral process as we have observed since 1999, which consequently heightened insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. Almost all the general elections conducted since independence have been marred by violence before, during and after the elections which have always led to wanton destruction of lives and property. Corrupt electioneering has posed a great challenge to democratic integrity and stability. Therefore, the major confrontation facing the Nigerian state is how to curb corruption in her democratic formations. In a nutshell, the fight against corruption in Nigeria over the years has failed to achieve the desired result simply because those who ought to fight corruption head long are the same people who are neck-deep in corrupt practices. Those in political leadership positions who are supposed to constitute role models to the followers are fingered as perpetrators.

If the political leadership is upright, insisting on the right thing and lead by example, members of the society would have no option but to follow suit. This accounts for the endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria. Political corruption is the bane of electoral integrity in Nigeria. Electoral corruption has impacted negatively on decision making in government. This is because the government that emerges from fraudulent electoral process spends better part of its term in office to fight legal battles with opposition parties at election tribunals. In order to move Nigeria to the next level, frantic efforts have to be made to address the problem of political corruption among the ruling class.

The following recommendations are however put forward

1. Introducing or launching national reorientation programmes to educate people on the negative impacts of corruption and the need to eradicate corruption in all facets of Nigerian's public life.
2. Moral Regeneration: This involves value re-orientation which de-emphasizes the use of money or wealth for recognition and relevance and, political contests. The influence of money as a factor in politics must be curtailed and discouraged.
3. The government must introduce an equitable wages and incentive system and improve other conditions of work so that the level of poverty could be reduced and the quality of life improved.
4. Government should go beyond mere pronouncement of anti-corruption policies. It should rather provide good governance and an enabling environment for democratic ideals to thrive.
5. Strict punishment should be applied to political thugs, terrorist, kidnappers and bandits caught.
6. Our electoral processes should be overhauled to instill credibility in it.
7. Internal democracy within the political parties should be encouraged to discourage godfatherism.
8. There should be a conflict resolution mechanism to mediate on the grievances put forward by the aggrieved parties.

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