

**Democracy and Monetization of Politics in Nigeria: Lessons from Edo State Poll 2020**

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**Abstract**

Money politics is at the heart of the general crisis of democracy and governance in Nigeria. Monetization of the democratic process within this turbulent time has become the deciding factor in Nigerian politics. With politics of the rich, the democratic essence is defeated. Thus, these scenarios of politics for sale tend to lead to politics of exclusion instead of inclusion as the political space is closed for the poor and open only for the rich. This has paved the way for the powerful elite to remain in power, and new comers to develop the elite character. Against this backdrop, this study focused on democracy and monetization of politics in Nigeria with particular reference to Edo State Poll, 2020. The study was anchored on prebendalism theory. Data for the study were drawn from participant observation and authentic secondary sources. The study identified that poor operational logistics, weak institutional framework on the side of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among others, still remained a major challenge in the Edo State Poll 2020. The study recommended among others that a statutory independent political party auditing body should be established to complement INEC in enforcing election expenses limits stipulated in Electoral Act 2010 on parties and candidates before, during and after elections.

**Keywords: Democracy, Politics, Monetization, Prebendalism Theory; Edo State**

### **Introduction**

Democracy in Nigeria since the first republic has been faced with lots of hurdles which included monetization of the electoral process in form of vote selling/trading, vote buying, gift etc, making it more or less difficult for the true principles of democracy to emerge. According to Ugwuibe, et. al (2017) without a free and fair election there can be no sustainable democracy. The political process in any given system requires funding in order to operate. The monetization of politics in Nigeria is not novel (Obioha, 2020). Elections occur in every even-numbered year for some federal and most state and local government offices in Nigeria. Thus, in every four years, Nigerians elect a president and vice president, governors, members of the National Assembly and members of the various State Houses of Assembly. Since the emergence of the Fourth Republic on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999, every four years, 469 Members of the National Assembly across the six geopolitical zones are elected in Nigeria. As at 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 when the study was conducted, Nigeria is in her 9th National Assembly and 21 years into an uninterrupted civil rule.

However, the amount of money, the source of the money, and the specific purpose the money serves in the execution of a campaign or electoral activity are important matters to consider. It should be acknowledged that money is a key determinant of politics in general and democracy in particular because without it most political activities including the conduct of periodic elections that make democracy a popular system of government cannot be smoothly conducted. The problem of money in politics arises only when set limits, sources, and uses are either violated or abused by politicians and other relevant actors. In a situation where prescribed limits or sources are ignored, the political space and the institutions governing the processes of elections and politicking become compromised. Money politics is quickly shrinking the political space, becoming a key variable in determining who participates in electoral politics (Obioha, 2020).

The monetization of politics in Nigeria has enhanced the investors (politicians) to pursue selfish monetary benefits and thus politicking has become a trading spot where the highest bidders determine, dictate and control the socio - economic and political affairs of the country. It has become a game of the rich maneuvering the electoral behaviour of the poor electorate. This has jettisoned politics of ideology and creativity to the extent that political parties and candidates bother not to outline manifestoes while vying for elective posts. As a matter of fact, the high cost of nomination form for party members seeking elective post for instance have become so high that only the rich can participate in party primaries. The high cost of the nomination forms will no doubt have a ripple effect on the psyche of the nation and the people of the country. Drawing a reference from the picking of nomination forms by aspirants especially of the two main political parties is a signal that elections in Nigeria is being monetized. Nigeria's multi-party democracy is indeed one of the highly monetized in sub-Saharan Africa. Nothing demonstrates this more aptly than the expression of interest and nomination fees of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and perhaps some other registered political parties in the country.

According to Afe (2020) the jettisoned politics of ideology in the Nigerian political environment is riddled with unbridled, indiscriminate political defections. As a result of this, there is hardly an election year that does not feature widespread political exodus and with the current trend of cross-carpeting being enacted in the Nigerian political landscape, fundamental principles, scruples and ideology have all been jettisoned for greed, self-interest and opportunism. Usually, a political defector in Nigeria does so, not as a reflection of any ideological leaning, but because he/she feels discontent with the former political party to which he/she belongs. These defections pose the question of morality, particularly when viewed from the standpoint that defections in Nigerian politics are primarily as a result of personality clash, power tussles, divergent views on the operations of a political party's philosophy, crisis or division within a given party, disagreement on party's position on an issue, and the realization of personal political ambition (Afe, 2020).

Empirically, the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020 election in Edo State has demonstrated that political ideology holds little or no relevance for politicians and the electorate alike in Nigeria. This is so as the re-election of Governor Obaseki on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a few weeks after his defection from the All Progressive Congress (APC), the two political parties which theoretically profess different ideologies and manifestoes, shows that the voting public is yet to fully understand or appreciate the importance of ideology in the political landscape (Afe, 2020). However, the thrust of this paper is to review the phenomenon of monetization of politics in Nigeria with particular reference to Edo State Poll, 2020.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study relied on a careful review of relevant literature drawn from text books, journals, newspapers, internet sources and documentaries from Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to articulate the viewpoint expressed in this paper. Each document was skimmed for relevance and then studied in detail after being deemed to be of potential significance.

### **Description of the Study Area**

The study was carried out in Edo State of South-south geopolitical zone, which is one of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Edo State has 18 Local Government Area. According to Premium Times (18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020) Edo State was part of defunct Bendel State until 1991. The state came into existence after Delta State was created out of the then Bendel on August 27, 1991. Benin City is the political capital of Edo State. The state is bounded in the South by Delta State, in the West by Ondo State and in the South and East by Kogi State (Premium Times, 2020).

## **CONCEPTUAL ISSUES OF THE STUDY**

### **Democracy and Monetization of Politics in Nigeria**

Democracy as a concept has attracted a plethora of definitions so much that even regimes that are known to be despotic, authoritarian and dictatorial take pride in describing themselves as democratic. Basically, the concept of democracy emerged from the two words of Greek, 'demos' meaning people and 'Kratos' meaning rule or power, which refers as rule of the people. Thus, democracy was believed to have its originality from the city-state of Anthen in the fifth century BC. It was probably in Anthen that democratic

state begins and subsequently transferred to other cities (Yusuf, 2020). Democracy is a people based government aimed at serving the interest of the masses. According to Okafor and Okafor (2018) democracy is an estimated system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives. From the above, democracy have certain empirical reference or characteristics which could be summarized viz: level of civil and political liberties manifested by freedom of speech and associations, the supremacy of the will of the electorates, regular and periodic elections through meaningful competition for elective position among individuals as representatives of political parties, accountability and the exclusion of the use of force and high level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies. Democracy survival especially in a prismatic society like Nigeria has to do with consensus since it involves general agreement over political management, including how to hold major offices on behalf of the citizen in the administration.

Nigeria as a country is a relative new entrant into the democratic system of government on account of the relatively longer period of military rule (1966 – 1999) and persistent truncation of democratic regimes of government by military rule (1966 – 1979, 1983 – 1999) until the fourth republic (1999 till date ). This explains why the latest experience in democratic governance in the fourth republic in Nigeria which started from 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999 has been described as democratic experiment, democratic learning process or nascent democracy (Okunloye, 2017). According to Yusuf (2020):

Monetization of politics refer to conception, pattern of behaviors and relationship between/among organizational activists, organizational contributors, opinion leaders, voters and non-voters involving the use of different forms of giving and taking of monetary or material inducements for the purposes of securing varieties of political patronage, allegiance, support or favour before, during and after intra-party or general elections in a political system (p.78).

To Okunloye (2017), monetization of politics is therefore the process or acts of the use of different forms of monetary or material inducement on citizens for securing the patronage, participation or votes during electoral politics as well as other stakeholders to seek undue favor to compromise the electoral process for the purpose of emerging victorious in the intra-party or general elections. According to Obioha (2020) for one to nurse the ambition of being considered as a presidential aspirant of APC, the person has to purchase an express of interest form at N5million and nomination form of N40 million, totaling a whopping sum of N45 million. The party pegged the fees for governorship aspirants at N22.5 million, senate N7 million, Federal House of Representative N3.85 million, state assembly N850,000. The party added as a foot note that female and physically challenged aspirant pay 50 percent of the prescribed fees for each position. For the Peoples' Democratic Party the fees for the purchase of form are lower than those of the APC but all the same there are still costly. The PDP pegged both expression of interest and nomination fee for the presidential bid at N12 million, governorship N6,000 million, Federal House of Representatives N2.5 million and state house of assembly N600,000. The party waived nomination fee for all female aspirants. This avenue of politics for sale could have implications leading to politics of exclusion instead of

inclusion as the political opportunities is closed for the poor and open only for the rich. The commercialization of political parties' forms, with a high amount, shut out young Nigerians in the 2019 elections (Abdullah, 2019). It had been attributed by the inability of the political parties to raise fund from the party members and other genius sources. However, this is against the 2017 electoral amendment bill Act, 6, of 2010 which prohibits arbitrary fee for nomination forms. The bill passed according to Inyang (2019) limits each elective office to pay for nomination forms as shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Fee for Nomination of Elective Post**

Elective Post	Cost of Nomination Forms in Naira
<b>Councillorship</b>	150,000
<b>Chairmanship</b>	250,000
<b>State House of Assembly</b>	500,000
<b>Federal House of Representatives</b>	1,000,000
<b>Senatorial Position</b>	2,000,000
<b>Governorship</b>	5,000,000
<b>Presidential</b>	10,000,000

**Source:** *Inyang (2019).*

Table 1 shows that despite the provisions in the Electoral Acts, to reduce the cost of Filling Expression of Interest Form (EOIF) and Elective Office Nomination Form (EONF), politicians spend much money on nomination forms; bridling big political parties' wigs, printing flyers and posters, advert on media among others. These according to Adebowale (2016) seem to have compounded the monetization of politics in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. The implication of the constitutional negligence is that Nigeria does not adhere strictly to the rule of law.

**September 19, 2020 Edo State Governorship Election: An Overview**

The governorship election in Edo State was held with 14 political parties. According to Kunle (2020), the major political parties and candidates are: Osagie Ize-Iyamuuuuuu of APC and the incumbent governor Godwin Obaseki of the PDP, who joined the party after being denied renomination by the APC. According to the INEC (2020) there were 2,210,534 million registered electorates out of which 1,726.738 million electorates collected their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs); and 483,796 uncollected PVCs. 14 registered political parties that participated in the election.

There was a peculiar dimension to the 2020 Edo State governorship election that calls for public attention. The people of Edo State for the first time in the political history of the State, stood boldly and said "enough is enough for Godfatherism". From the whole starting, leading, to the finishing of the Edo State election, many lessons have been learnt - indelible and worthy lessons the authors must say. According to Chima (2020), the turnout of people who voted was massive. This is the first in the history of Edo State election where a lot of eligible voters were involved in the voting exercise. This, no doubt is an indication that electorate are getting to know their civic duties under a democratic system like Nigeria. Democracy is a form of government where the people choose their leaders and are allowed to voice their opinions on issues. No doubt, with recent conclusion and turned out witnessed in the Edo election, Nigerians are convinced that other States will have same motive and desire to churn out massive people to participate in their respective electoral processes. The number of people who really participated in the Edo State

election is no doubt big indication that the electorate are now getting conscious of choosing their political leader(s). However, the voting pattern indicated a surprising result where the eligible voters massively voted for the incumbent PDP aspirant after defecting to the main opposition party as presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Political Parties and Voters results**

S/No	Political Parties	Gender	Name of Candidates	Total Votes Received
1.	Action Alliance (AA)	M	Edemakhiota G. Osaimiamia	107
2.	African Democratic Congress (ADC)	F	Mabel A. Oboh	1370
3.	African Democratic Party (ADP)	M	Obio L. Emmanuel	2374
4.	All Progressives Congress (APC)	M	Osagie A. Ize-Iyamu	223619
5.	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	M	Osagie L. Idehen	177
6.	Allied Peoples Movement (APM)	M	Igbineweka Osamuode	57
7.	Action Peoples Party (APP)	M	Amos O. Areloegbe	78
8.	Labour Party (LP)	M	Osifo U.E. Isaiah	267
9.	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	F	Agol E. Tracy	258
10.	National Rescue Movement (NRM)	M	Stevie N. Ozono	573
11.	People Democratic Party (PDP)	M	Godwin N. Obaseki	307,955
12.	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	M	Felix I. Obayangbon	323
13.	Young Progressives (YPP)	M	Osagiobare Jones	132
14.	Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)	M	Akhalambe Amiemenoghena	117

**Source:** INEC (2020).

Table 2 points at one major critical issue that focus on gender sensitive. It was recorded that only two female aspirant contested for the governorship election in Edo State. This is an indication that the return of Nigeria to democratic rule has however not led to a drastic change in the position of the common Nigerian woman, particularly as actors in electoral politics. Despite the comparative progress made in gender inclusion, under the Jonathan administration in the country (2010- 2015) the male gender still dominate the political process in Nigeria. This point to the fact that the so-called dividends of democracy in Nigeria nascent democracy are still controlled by the male gender. Another significant issue is that Godwin Obaseki, the PDP candidate, came in during his first tenure via the platform of the APC. The Edo people voted APC and that was why he won as the governor in his first tenure (Chima, 2020). This election which Godwin Obaseki contested under the platform of the PDP and which he gained massive support showed how the electorate were more interested in the governor than whatever party he belongs to.

One must take note that the PDP has received condemnations from electorates in prior elections

which made APC gained fame. A critical review of the victory in the recently concluded Edo State Governorship election, one is compelled to say that Nigerians have graduated

to a reasonable extents from the stage of voting party and are now more interested in the person contesting via that political party. There is no doubt that Nigerians have come to the decision that the person contesting is greater than the party itself, and influences more.

There is no doubt that if Obaseki had contested under APC, he would have still garnered the votes he gained during his second tenure bid. The summary of the 2020 governorship election results is further shown in table 3 and 4 below, respectively:

**Table 3: Summary of Votes Cast in Edo State 2020 Governorship Election in Nigeria**

S/No	Summary of Votes	Total Count
1.	Registered Voters	2,210,534
2.	Collected PVCs	1,726,738
3.	Uncollected PVCs	483,796
4.	Valid Votes (As Collated)	537,407
5.	Rejected Votes (As Collated)	12,835
6.	Votes Cast (As Collated)	550,242

Source: INEC Official Report (2020) & Complied by the Authors (2020)

**Table 4: Edo State Governorship Election Results by each Senatorial District**

S/No	Senatorial District	PDP	APC	Margin	Winner
1	Edo North	82,453	104,961	22,508	APC
2.	Edo Central	60,240	34,900	25,340	PDP
3.	Edo South	165,262	83,758	81,504	PDP
	Total	307,955	223,619	84,336	PDP

Source: INEC Official Report (2020) & Complied by the Authors (2020)

Table 4 shows that in the three senatorial district in Edo State APC won only in one senatorial district (Edo North) and with a total valid vote of 223, 619 representing 41.6 percent. PDP won the remaining two senatorial district (Edo Central and Edo South) and with a total valid vote of 307,955 representing 57.3 percent.

### Theoretical Framework

The adoption of a reliable theory in reviewing the monetization of elections in Nigeria with particular references to Edo State poll 2020 is a necessity. Several theories call for usage, however, the prebendalism theory is deemed most appropriate for the study. The theory is predicated on the need to recognize and fully understand the interdependence between democracy and monetization of elections in Nigeria. Prebendalism was a term used to describe patron-clientelism or neo-pratimonialism in Nigeria. According to the core proponent of the theory, “state offices are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by officeholders, who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups ([www.en.m.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.m.wikipedia.org)). These material benefits were equally held to be of a patron-client nature and thus converted where possible into hereditary entitlements. The theory describes the pattern of politics whereof “state power is sought by politicians as a means of personal material aggrandizement. This obtains in a context where the state has usurped the role of the economy as the major

wealth creator, employer of labour, guarantor of socio-economic security and winners takes it all. The prebendal character of politics in Nigeria has significantly influenced how state power is sought and utilized. In this respect, politicking attracts inestimable premium and high stakes. Given these high stakes, politicians resort to a variety of means –whether fair or foul –to attain public office as in the case of two main political parties (APC and PDP) in Edo State.

Applying prebendalism theory gives an understanding on how politics in Nigeria has led to the monetization and materialization of electioneering and partisan politics in Nigeria. The exchange of votes for money as exemplified in the phenomenon of voters-inducement is, therefore, a necessary consequence of the prebendal character of politics in Nigeria. The character of the Nigeria state makes the capture of state power irresistibly attractive. In Nigeria, political power is sought by every means, legal or otherwise and those who already control state power try to keep it by every means. What emerges is a political system which does not know legitimacy or legality, only expediency. However, the state power resistance constitutes forces which influence the direction and the success of any election in Nigeria. This is why the core mandates of INEC and other key election management bodies in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections seem unattainable. This prebendal orientation to a reasonable extent is, indeed, a diametrical opposite of an effective representative democracy as the central concern of the representatives has come to border more on how to share for themselves the national cake rather than effectively represent the electorates and extend democracy dividends to the citizens. In this context, election exercises are turned into power struggle among contending political candidates and often time a nightmare for election officials and the electorate. All these are few justifications for the relevance of the prebendalism theory in understanding the place of “monetization of politics” in consolidating Nigeria democracy.

The expediency of power struggles in the arena of electioneering necessitates and compels the adoption of extra-legal incentives to ensure electoral success and victory of the incumbent governor even after defecting to the major opposition party (PDP). In this regard, politicians and party loyalist resorted to material inducement or intimidation in their desperate bid to gain electoral advantage. In this circumstance, monetization in form of, vote-selling, voters-inducement, vote trading among others becomes a competitive electoral strategic tactic. It is on this justification that the theory is considered to be relevant to the study.

#### **Edo State 2020 Governorship Election: Some Operational Lapses**

The Edo State Governorship election of 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 although free and fair to some reasonable extent, but was still face with some challenges among which are:

- **Voters Inducement/Vote Buying**

Vote-buying connote the exchange of voting right by the voters with money from a candidate in an election. It is a process whereby the individual conscience and views are manipulated to the advantage of the political parties' candidates in an election through the use of money or other material things to induce and appeal to the electorate directly or indirectly. The Edo State election really showed that there are still some electorate among eligible voters who are still ignorant of the threats buying and selling of votes could cost the State and the country at large. Political parties, especially the APC and PDP invested on the distribution of money and gift item as a strategy to swing voters.



To buttress this point, the place of money in Nigeria politics again reared its head during the election as agents of different political parties were sighted openly distributing cash gifts at polling booths to sway the support of voters. According to Kunle (2020), party agents, identified to belong to one of the main political parties in the election, were secretly canvassing for votes by distributing various gift items to the voters.

For example it was further noted by **Ebuka (2020) that voters inducement was rampant** in Adams International School Evbareke 1 Polling Unit in Egor. It was directly observed that voters openly showed how they marked their ballots. Vote buying was reported in Uromi-Open Space VI, 013, Uelen/Okugbe/ Uromi, party agents were seen distributing cash to voters. Similarly, Yiaga Africa observers stationed at Asoro Grammar School, PU 002 in Ward 1 of Egor LGA, reported that party agents especially the main political parties (APC and PDP) agents distributed cash to influence voters. Similar incidents were also reported in Omo Nursery/Primary School, PU 005, Ward 1 in Egor LGA, where party agents were seen giving cash to voters. The idea of money politics was a major factor inhibiting credible elections in contemporary Nigeria.

Kunle further stated that INEC which condemned reports of voters' inducement and selling also frowned at the violation of COVID-19 safety protocols especially with regards to the social distancing rule. All the polling Units visited during the election exercise witnessed massive turnout of voters who neither wore face masks nor observed social distancing rule as the election was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic induced-lockdown.

▪ **INEC Card Reader Hitches**

The INEC card reader is a portable device used in voting. The Electronic Voting Authentication (EVA) device is configured to read only the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) issued by the INEC. According to INEC (2017,p.53) the Card Reader is used to verify the biometrics of the voter, thereby check-mating all forms of impersonation by voters. The Card Reader was configured to read only the PVCs of a particular polling unit and can only work on election day.

According to Okoro (2020) Card Reader (CR) used to accredit voters malfunctioned in some of the Units in Uhunmwonde Local Government Area of Edo State. It was gathered that at Ward 07 Uvbebeisi Primary School, Card reader failed to function properly and subsequently led to multiple voting in most Units by a political party.

The Card Readers provided for the Edo Governorship election to authenticate fingerprints of voters in Esan West and Esan Central Local Government Areas on the Election Day failed to recognise some voters. Correspondents of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), who monitored the election in the areas, reported that while the Card Readers easily identified the voter cards, they failed to authenticate their fingerprints. This abnormally was noticeable at the polling units in Ward 5 (Uhunmudumu Primary School), and units 14, 15 and 16 (Emado Primary School) in Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government Area. The same was applicable in units 5 and 6, Ward 6 (Idumebo Primary School), in Esan Central Local Government Area. However, NAN reported that the voters were still allowed to vote after the cases were incidented on INEC form after which the voters were made to thumbprint in the form. Also in some polling units in Oredo Local Government Area there were difficulties in operating the Card Readers. A few of the Card Readers were unable to function due to non activation of the Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) card in the device and low battery.

▪ **Security Challenges**

According to Clifford et. al (2020) no fewer than 35,000 security personnel, including 31,000 policemen were delayed to ensure violent free and credible election in Edo State. Indeed this led to initial tight security around the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) branch in Benin City which caused gridlock at Ring road, the city centre and adjoining road, leading to Airport road.

Some of the security agencies that participated in the election exercise included the Nigerian Army, Police Mobile Force, Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Customs Service and the Directorate of State Services (DSS). Others were the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Air Force, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigerian Immigration Service and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.

With these security agencies one was expecting not to entertain any excuse whatsoever, for the Edo State election exercises not to be peaceful. The eligible voters were therefore optimistic that the security agencies would check the excesses of trouble makers and protect the electorate.

According to Sahara report (2020) electoral observers reported sporadic shooting leading to the suspension of voting in Idumwongo Polling Units (PU), Ward 7 in Orhionmwon Local Government Area. The voting process was also disrupted in Obodeko Primary School, PU 003 in Ward 8 of Igueben Local Government Area where a political party supporter mobilized thugs to the PU to disrupt the process (Sahara Report, 2020).

Election observers reported some gross inadequacy of security agents in many of the polling units visited. A development which exposed the electorate to unforeseen danger. For example the election Observers reported incidents of ballot box snatching by party supporters in Ozolua Grammar School, Polling Unit 009 of Ward 10 in Ikpoba/Okha LGA and Obodeko Amahor Primary School Unit 003 of Ward 8 in Igueben LGA.

According to Ebuka (2020) a journalists covering the polls were molested by thugs. The incident took place at the polling unit of the immediate past national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Adams Oshiomhole, at Ward 10 (Uzairue North East), Polling Unit 1 of Etsako West local government in Iyamho area of Uzairue. Another journalists named, Samson Adenekan, was slapped, manhandled and then briefly detained by the thugs for allegedly taking pictures and videos of the election exercise. This is a clear indication that Nigerian nascent democracy has, without any shadow of doubt, become engulfed by the security challenges especially during elections.

**Monetization of Politics in Nigeria: Selected Influential Factors**

▪ **Institutional Failures**

In Nigeria, the key institutions that administer and support electoral process, most notably is the INEC and the Nigerian police. In every election cycle since independence, the problem has been how to deal with issues relating to election management in Nigeria, especially the activities of the electoral umpire. INEC as the key stakeholder in the game of politics and more specifically electioneering politics lacks the human, technical and supervisory capacity to monitor political spending and election expenses of political parties and candidates before and during elections. The government attention has always been on how to address institutional failures, such as ineffective resource management, poor preparations, collusion among politicians and election officials to cheat as well as electoral violence (Ekezie, 2018). Others are acts of intimidation by contending groups, especially political parties, and the use of security agents for election duties. The

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and its activities have been mired in controversies.

Consequently, the government has always deployed energy and resources in efforts to deal with the challenges of election management, including electoral violence. This is the reason that in addition to addressing logistic challenges of INEC, the government also mobilises the security agencies to secure the election environment. Furthermore, government restricts the movement of persons on election days, but the measures have not guaranteed the sanctity and integrity of the process as the election outcomes are often declared inconclusive and contested in either in re-run elections or courts. However, the Electoral Act stipulate, some form of punishments for vote marketers which INEC should strictly adhere to.

- **Poverty**

Poverty, according to Mukhtar et al. (2016), is a multidimensional state of deprivation involving lack of basic requirements, social and political exclusion and lack of education. Poverty is a condition of having insufficient resources or income. In a recent report by Ahiuma-Young (2018), for every minute in Nigeria six persons slip into poverty and six out of ten Nigeria are also estimated to be living in poverty. Poverty is characterized by hunger, malnutrition, ill-health, unsanitary housing and living conditions and often without required education and resources to overcome these afflictions. The manner in which vote-buying/voters inducement is carried out these days is alarming. It is being practically carried out openly without fear simply because of the level of hunger in the society.

- **Political Aspirant's Investment Mentality**

In Nigeria political office seekers see political positions as personal investment. Political investors and other major financiers or political godfathers and political mothers of the political process or of individuals seeking appointed positions often fund these activities for ulterior motives. Knowing fully well that losing an election in Nigeria has dire financial consequences. The certainty of candidates getting 'something' in the end, through voters' inducement and other corrupt activities encourages the willingness towards funding of political activities, especially elections. As such, electoral funding is an investment with (expected) returns at the end of the day. Accordingly, the loose and enabling environment for monetization of politics tends to encourage electoral corruption and winners take it all syndromes in Nigeria.

### **Implications of Monetization of Politics in Nigeria**

- **Restriction of Freedom of the Citizens**

Monetization of politics has the tendency of undermining the freedom of the voters to choose their government and determine how they should be governed. This is because the winners of the elections are often no longer the most popular, credible and potentially performing parties and candidates. Rather, they are sometimes the 'highest bidders' and 'payers' of money, other material gratifications of votes during general elections.

- **Mortgaged the Dividends of Democracy**

When politics or the electoral process is monetized, the fortune or right of voters to access and enjoy good governance and allied dividends of democracy is predominantly mortgaged. Voters

only stand the chance of getting another set of ‘crumbs’ of voting inducements towards the end of tenure when the political bidders will show up to distribute the immediate material requirements to ‘capture’ voters and access their votes to win election and rule for another four years as contained in the Nigerian Constitution.

▪ **Electoral Corruption**

Monetization of politics creates and enhances conducive environment for corruption to thrive in all sectors of the society. Give and take political transaction, cash and carry voting behavior, political brokers and jobbers and allied facilitators of corruption in society have the tendency of growing rapidly in society where politics is monetized (Okunloye, 2017).

**Conclusion**

The study has demonstrated that the Edo State 2020 governorship election were neither perfect nor faultless; thereby revealed persistent challenges, which includes logistical and operational problems. Nevertheless, the elections provided a genuine opportunity for eligible voters in Edo State to exercise their right to vote and for their votes to count compared to the previous elections in Nigeria and the recent Edo State election in particular. However, there are still critical areas of concern which need urgent attention as shown in the paper. This includes strengthening the legal instruments governing the country’s elections especially in light of outstanding issues that have been highlighted. The challenges posed by card reader should adequately be addressed. The paper equally infers that money politics is nothing but a threat to sustainable democracy. In conclusion, the paper does not only highlight the manifestation of money politics in the nascent democracy but also emphasizes its implications on the future democracy in Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

Based on the outcome of this case study review, we hereby make the following recommendations:

First and foremost the senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should enact laws that criminalize monetary and material inducement of any form should be enforced. Enforcement of such laws should ensure that both the politician who gives out money to induce and the voter who takes the money are liable. It is recommended that an enforcement agency should be created specifically for electoral laws different from INEC.

Secondly, a statutory independent political party auditing body should be established to complement INEC in enforcing election expenses limits stipulated in Electoral Act 2010 on parties and candidates before during and after elections.

Finally, the government through the electoral commission (INEC) must ascertain compliance to the electoral act and ready to enforce disciplinary action on any violator.

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