

THE MENACE OF VOTE BUYING IN NIGERIA ELECTORAL SYSTEM: ISSUES, CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS 2015-2023

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Abstract: *Vote-buying and other forms of electoral inducements are common phenomenon in Nigerian politics. This is so because the average voter is not only poor but also illiterate and unable to resist the alluring effects of uncontrolled electoral gratifications that come in cash or kind or both. Vote-buying is inherently a derivation of election fraud. Vote buying is the root cause of bad governance and a facilitator of the imposition of the incorrect and incompetent group of individuals to fill positions in governance. This study examines the menace of vote buying in Nigeria electoral system with focus on the issues, possible causes and solution within a defined period. The study revealed that the ripple effects of vote-buying which stems from bad governance includes the insecurity of lives and properties, wide spread corruption and general lack of accountability by the ruling elite. It further revealed that the menace breeds incompetent leadership, and incompetence breeds illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty. The paper suggests among other things that the deployment of modern technologies to enable prospective voters vote from their homes using their phones would be the game changer for future elections in Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Elections, vote, vote buying, menace, issues, money politics, Nigeria.*

Introduction

In recent years, the problem of vote buying has become a major feature in the Nigerian political system. The problem of vote buying has trumped the goal to establish a democratic form of governance. The democratic economic institution is being rapidly weakened by this situation. Nigeria's political politics can be appropriately described as a "cash and carry democracy" given the extent to which votes are exchanged for cash. If this scenario is not promptly resolved, it poses a serious threat to the future of the Nigerian political system. Vote buying is "the exchange of money and material compensation by a voter to a political party or candidate to cast a vote in his favour or even to abstain from voting so as to boost the candidates chance of winning the elections," according to the definition of the term. Therefore, the issue of vote buying is viewed as a contract between the voter and the candidate or political party doing the purchase. Recent evidence suggests that vote purchasing takes place during voter registration, the nomination process, Election Day, and campaigning. However, they were virtually in charge throughout the election in order to get people to vote for the candidate they could afford.

Vote-buying is a commercial process in which candidates for public office, political parties, or their agents negotiate to purchase the voters' votes from the sellers. It is the same as exchanging products and services for agreed-upon rates in a public market. The

procedure appears to be an auction sale where the voters sell to the highest bidder when there is fierce competition. With an emphasis on its risky with vote-buying (cash-and-carry democracy), other electoral misdeeds, ethnic chauvinism, religious extremism, and politically motivated violence and killings, contemporary social science and humanities scholars trace the historical origin of elections and electoral processes in Nigeria (Onuoha & Okafor, 2020; Adigun, 2019; Olaniyan, 2020; Amao, 2020; Onapajo et al., 2015; Olorunmola, 2016.). This is in addition to the compromise of election standards by INEC officials in favour of their preferred candidates in most of the elections conducted since 1999 to date, (Efebeh, 2011).

The majority of vote buying, a phenomenon that possibly represents the essence of politics and elections, is at the centre of Nigeria's political process, which Onapajo et al. emphasize has "always been notorious for its chaotic nature" (2015, p. 2). Amao (2020) supports this claim by emphasizing that the Nigerian electoral process has frequently been criticized for its violent, corrupt, and chaotic tendencies, which include the use of thugs and the maiming of political opponents by those attempting to gain electoral positions through electoral fraud. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that almost all elections held in Nigeria were dogged by controversy, with both their processes and results suffering from a crisis of integrity, credibility, and legitimacy. Onuoha and Okafor (2020) assert that as videos and images reveal the illegal practice of political aspirants and party agents distributing money, materials, and other incentives among the electorates in order to persuade voters to vote for their candidates, vote-buying has recently increased in proportion, scope, and sophistication. According to Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart (2010, p. 1), *there are still significant doubts about Nigeria's ability and political will to hold free, fair, and peaceful elections while Africa's largest democracy gears up for the vote. Nigerian politicians have developed a habit of fraud, corruption, intimidation, and violence as if they believe these are the essential tools of political winners since the country's independence in 1960, when violence and numerous irregularities have persistently marred the process of electing the nation's leaders.*

According to Olorunmola (2016), financial resources are important for political parties to manage their operations both before and after elections. Unchecked use of resources, whether they are public or private, for political purposes has the power to undermine democratic ethics, practices, and principles; it bestows unfair advantages and unfairly modifies voters' options. "The 2015 general election was one of the most lavishly funded elections, with the two front-runners competing to spend more money than the other. Vote buying was blatantly and audaciously done in the 2015 and 2019 elections, often involving electoral officials and security personnel (Adigun, 2019. p. 21). In the same vein, the 2023 general election also saw the massive usage of funds from the various party primaries to the main elections in February and March, even upon the scarcity of funds accessioned by the naira redesign policy of the Federal Government. Thus, the monetisation of the Nigerian political space has made it difficult for people of impeccable characters to seek political elective positions thereby making charlatans with very little or no genuine intentions for the Nigerian people to take over the space for self aggrandizement, (Efebeh, 2018). The cases of Olisa Metuh misusing N400 million and US\$2 million originally intended for national security to sponsor President Jonathan's re-election bid through vote-buying (Yahaya, 2020); Sambo Dasuki misusing US\$2.1 billion and N19.4 billion originally intended for the purchase of arms for the army to sponsor

President Jonathan's re-election bid through vote-buying (Nnoch, 2016); and Diezani Alison-Madueke Officials from the INEC received \$115 million, those from the Fidelity Bank received N185,842,000, Fidelia Omoile, the electoral officer, received N112,480,000, Uluochi Obi-Brown, the INEC administrative secretary, received N111,500,000, Edem Okon Effang, the former INEC deputy director, received N241,127,000, and Immaculata Asuquo, the INEC head of voter education, received N241,127,000 Resident Assistant Inspector General of Police in Kwara State is paid N1 million, Kwara State Commissioner of Police is paid N10 million, Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of operations is paid N2 million, Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of operations and administration is paid N1 million, Resident Electoral Commissioner is paid N10 million, and Administrative Secretary is paid N5 million. INEC's Head of Department (Operations) and direct reports received N5 million, while line officials received N2 million. The paramilitary organizations received N20 million, the officer in charge of the mobile police received N7 million, the second in charge of the mobile police received N10 million, the director of state security services received N2.5 million, and the military personnel in Kwara State received N50 million. All of these sums were intended to tamper with the results of elections (Alli, 2016; Kayode-Adedeji, 2015; Onyekwere, 2017).

In the majority of situations, these electoral bargains have thrown democracies off course, resulting in the loss of lives and property, political instability, underdevelopment, poverty, and poor governance. The vote-buying syndrome, one of the main causes of electoral fraud, is neither a recent development nor unique to Nigerian politics. The development efforts and consolidation of democratic politics have been ruined for years by a widespread, international political ailment. It extends beyond the continent of Africa to other regions of the world. Vote-buying, for instance, is a common political tactic to entice votes in the United States, the Philippines, Britain, Pakistan, India, and several other European nations. Nicaragua, Argentina, Taiwan, and Lebanon are additional nations that use it during elections. Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Sao Tome Principe, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Uganda, Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, etc. are all countries in Africa where vote-buying is extremely common (Ovwasa, 2013; Efebeh, 2013, Baidoo et al., 2018; Onuoha & Ojo, 2018; Romero & Regalado, 2019). The situation is compared to a market where the buyers are the political candidates and the sellers are the votes, and the medium of exchange is money. Before or after the vote is cast, the voter receives payment for buying their vote along with proof that the vote was indeed cast.

The extent of politicians' eagerness to win a local election determines the worth of a vote. Although purchasing votes can be accomplished with money and other valuables, political actors have opted for two basic strategies. The practice of purchasing votes, which is against the law, has recently put the Nigerian electoral system under scrutiny. The study aims to evaluate the threat of vote buying in the electoral system of Nigeria, including problems, effects, causes, and solutions.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of vote buying is fast undermining Nigeria's democratic values. The threat has damaged Nigerians' sense of integrity. The unfettered expression of the voters'

will has been purposefully curtailed. The issue calls into question the election's legitimacy, integrity, and credibility. Vote buying results in terrible governance; because the mechanism that produced the leader was unconstitutionally sound, the voters might not have the right to challenge it when things go wrong and the promises made are not kept. Sometimes, the costs of voting greatly outweigh the rewards, and it is the economy that suffers, not the kids or the future. Politicians then reclaim these funds from the system as a cost of running for office. The study's challenge is to evaluate the threat of vote buying in Nigeria's electoral system, including its causes, effects, and remedies.

Research method

This research, which is qualitative in nature, concentrated on the secondary way of collecting information from pre-existing sources. The documentary method is based on the descriptive examination of documents that contain crucial information about the topic being studied. "Describe the documentary approach as the strategies used to categorize, investigate, evaluate, and highlight the limitations of physical sources, most typically written documents whether in the private or public domain," say Payne and Payne (Mogalakwe, 2006). "The application of documentary methods relates to the investigation of records that contain information about the topic under research," claims Mogalakwe (2006). Social scientists have the wrong idea that professional historians, librarians, and information science specialists dominate this type of research methodology. In his opinion, certain social scientists "frequently depict the qualitative approaches as a pointless endeavour, incapable of aiding in the study of social phenomena let alone prescribing for its resolution or amelioration," according to Umar (2016, p. 127) Burnham et al. (2004, p. 168) contend that it is therefore "rather remarkable that the majority of social research techniques texts fail to provide documentary materials more than a fleeting reference."

Theoretical framework

The study's theoretical framework of analysis is reciprocal determinism theory. According to the theory of reciprocal determinism, a person's behaviour both influences and is affected by their personality traits and their environment. The environment, the individual, and the behaviour-three key factors that affect behavioural pattern - are the foundation of the theory's concept. The model illustrates how the three elements are interconnected and how this leads to their interdependence and cooperative production of reflective answers. Individual behaviour is influenced by the environment, and individual responses also have an impact on the environment. The theory thus examines how our actions affect the environment. An early proponent of this notion was psychologist Albert Bandura (Singh, 2018). Harris (1998) and Akoul were two other defenders of the thesis (1998). Akoul provided information on earlier claims made by a child that kids were passive recipients of environmental effects and that kids were easily shaped in whatever way parents, teachers, and other caregivers chose to work. According to the theory of reciprocal determinism, as their environment shapes them, newborns become more participatory and practical members of society. Given that their traits, emotions, ideas, and behaviours affect how they interact with and respond to their environment, it would be

challenging for them to act as a result of learned connections or reinforcing (Cherry, 2018; Singh, 2018).

The foundation of this theory is the idea that there is a connection between human behaviour and the environment, whereby the environment affects human behaviour. To put it another way, the environment that results in the very poor behaviour of elected public office holders, the appalling performance of the government in power to provide good governance, the inability to deliver public services effectively, the lack of infrastructural facilities and the welfare of the public, which is paramount in governance, the poor legislation and a disservice to the people, the incompetence of government functionaries, and the unique experiences of voters fanned their sense of injustice; this also influences the ways and manner a state actor is perceived within the comity of nations in contemporary global relations, (Efebeh, 2020; Efebeh & Okereka, 2020). For instance, a lack of honest electoral procedures, openness, and accountability in government created a mindset among voters where they would react to the environment by exchanging their votes for cash and/or goods. Reciprocal determinism describes how the environment has an impact on a person's personality. Cherry (2018, p. 2) emphasizes that the environment component consists of the person's immediate physical surroundings that may contain reinforcing cues, such as other people who are there (or absent). Just as the behaviour itself may have an effect on the environment, the environment affects the activity's frequency and intensity. The individual component, on the other hand, consists of all the traits that have previously been rewarded.

A person's expectations, beliefs, and distinctive personality traits are all crucial psychological and cognitive aspects that influence how they behave. Vote-buying serves as a stimulation or environmental effect on the voters before and during election times in Nigeria, and vote-selling is a response to the stimulus on the environment. According to the reciprocal determinism theory, vote-selling is a reaction of voters to the environment, whereas vote-buying is a symbol of a severe lack of leadership and poor government. A critical paradigm shift from a behavioural perspective to a social-cognitive approach to behaviour understanding has been proven by Bandura's theory. While behaviourists held that an individual's behaviour is entirely influenced by their environment, Bandura recognized the importance of the interaction between people, their behaviours, and their environments. It shows, in large part, that while people are impacted by their individual experiences in their environment, they also have the power as a group to change their condition and circumstances by selfless actions and problem-solving techniques.

Manifestation of vote-buying in election periods

Depending on the history, culture, political experience, and election models of the people, the term "vote-buying" might have different meanings to different people or countries. There isn't a typical, single definition of "vote buying" that is accepted worldwide. While Bryan and Baer (2005, p. 4) defined vote-buying as "the use of money and direct benefits to influence voters," Etzioni-Halevy (1989, p. 287) defined the notion as "the exchange of private material rewards for political support." The two definitions emphasized the goal of vote-buying, which is to obtain immediate socio-economic advantages in exchange for voters' political support. Money politics' revolting appearance in Nigeria's political system is a deliberate violation of the country's electoral rules. Vote-

buying opportunities arise from politicians' apparent lack of adept use of opposing political ideologies and problem-solving manifestos to appeal to voters' consciences and persuasively influence the political behaviour of electorates in addressing risky social issues that would affect their individual or collective lives and interests.

In order to promote good governance, political elites often resort to mudslinging, non-issue-based campaigns, hate speeches, and inflammatory utterances because they lack innovative political knowledge, are unaware of their political parties' platforms, and are at odds with the raging socio-economic and political debates. Vote-buying and other electoral fraud are the only feasible, enticing alternatives available to these unsalable candidates or political parties to support or rest on their excessive goals (Sarkariyau et al., 2015).

Vote-buying in 2015 general elections and money politics in Nigeria

The goal of vote-buying in the general elections of 2015 is to sway voters' voting decisions, tip the political scales in the buyers' favour, and realize the goal of securing electoral success. Vote-buying boosts election enthusiasm and encourages high voter turnout in exchange for financial or material incentives. According to Nurdin (2014), this high voter turnout for incentives has a big impact on voting behaviour, though not necessarily for the sake of voting per se but rather for the purpose of collecting the rewards. Nigeria's politics are dominated by and determined by money. Because of their limited resources, the poor are a vulnerable group of voters who are more likely to be victimized, intimidated, and duped by vote-buying. Examples of such inducements include promises of basic goods, small sums of money, or job opportunities (Abba & Babalola, 2017; Onapajo & Babalola, 2020). According to Baidoo et al. (2018, p. 3). Three main justifications for the roots of vote-buying in elections have been recognized by theoretical viewpoints. In the first place, it is suggested that socio-economic conditions, particularly poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, significantly contribute to the market for votes in democracies.

Second, it is asserted that a certain electoral system's voting procedures may also ensure the prevalence of vote-buying during elections. The third theory is based on the idea that polarization and party organization in a given state are what lead to vote-buying. Votes are not purchased without taking the voter's affiliation into account. Three voting groups have been identified, including opposition supporters, swing voters, and core supporters (Baidoo et al., 2018). Every election is focused on one of these three groups; they are the target audience for vote-buying. Vote-buying proposals frequently centered on either voting preferences or voting participation with the aim of persuading people to vote a certain way or not to vote at all. In order to encourage the uninformed and underprivileged to vote during elections, political parties create both monetary and non-monetary incentives. President Goodluck Jonathan's donors received billions of naira from anonymous friends, individuals, ambiguous groups, and corporate bodies with somewhat "fictitious" names during the 2015 presidential election, and Mohammadu Buhari's donors (as shown above) went against the constitutional provision in Section 225(2), which states: "Every political party shall submit to the Independent National Electoral Commission" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 116). The cash-for-vote phenomenon has brought up important questions about political legitimacy in Nigeria, where candidates for office are constantly engaging in unchecked corruption.

Vote-buying was blatantly visible during the PDP and APC conventions' intra-party candidate nomination processes, particularly during the APC's 3-day Lagos presidential primary prior to the 2015 general elections (the origin of Nigeria's current problem). There were 7,214 delegates present at the convention, and each one was supposedly given US\$5,000 by the two main competitors. The Atiku Abubakar camp was supposed to provide the delegates \$2,000 apiece, while the Muhammadu Buhari group was supposed to give them another \$3,000 each. There were 7,214 accredited delegates that cast ballots in the APC primaries. Atiku's group may have spent more than \$14,428,000 and Buhari's group more than \$21,642,000, respectively, solely on buying votes, omitting expenses for lodging, food, and transportation during the primary. It was a game where the person making the largest offer would win. The People's Democratic Party, on the other hand, was accused of using public funds to support President Goodluck Jonathan's reelection as the only candidate on its presidential ticket, as shown in Appendix A1. These unannounced campaign visits to the palaces of the monarchs in the north and west were also alleged to be vote-buying tactics (Owete, 2014).

Vote-buying in general elections and money politics in Nigeria

The APC-led government deployed its intimidating public resources and vast coercive arsenal during the 2019 general elections to harass and control opposition parties and their followers, which resulted in the widespread use of vote-buying. On February 22, 2019, during the presidential election, Bola Tinubu, the APC's national leader, drove two bullion-vans into his home. These vehicles had significant amounts of cash that were being carelessly distributed to party operatives for vote-trading. However, neither the security personnel nor the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), nor the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC), nor the INEC (the regulatory body) looked into the matter after the image of the bullion vans and the crowd of potential vote-sellers went viral on the social media. According to the 1999 Constitution, the president appoints the chairman of INEC, members of the Management Board from each of the six geopolitical zones, the chairman of the EFCC, the chairman of the ICPC, the Inspector-General of Police, the Service Chiefs, and the heads of paramilitary agents. These organizations are merely the presidency's tentacles, and they blatantly advance the interests of the ruling party rather than those of society. Voters were forced to avoid polling places due to the misuse of security agents, such as the military, paramilitary personnel, and police, and their unwelcome activities that disrupted polling units and collation centres, as well as the military's unlawful arrest and detention of INEC officials and the forced confiscation of election materials and collated results in order to advance their own agendas.

In order to undermine the will of the electorate, INEC acknowledged that military forces and armed gangs violently raided collation centres, intimidating INEC staff, and unlawfully detained them. The participation of military forces in Nigeria's 2019 general elections was denounced by the European Union Election Observation Mission, the NDI, the NDI, the Centre for Democracy and Development, and Integrity Friends for Truth and Peace Initiative (Bassey, 2019; WANEP-West Africa Network for Peace Building, 2019).

The Effect of Vote Buying in Nigeria Electoral System

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2018) acknowledged or affirmed that voters in Nigeria are given cash, goods like food and clothing, and jobs. This conduct is supported by rewards that aren't expressly and formally connected to voting booth reciprocity. The generality of the people are believed to be unaware of the detrimental repercussions of buying and selling votes. Money-grubbing politicians prioritize their own interests over that of the general people. The results of vote buying or vote selling to the general public and the 2019 general elections are listed below.

Denying the Dividend of Democracy

The impact of buying or selling votes is so great that most uninformed people are unaware that political gladiators who provide peanuts in exchange for votes are doing it against the interests of the electorates. When they come into positions of authority, many of them turn their backs on the populace and become inaccessible. Their loved ones come first; they don't have the general good of society at heart. Their children go to school abroad, while others who cannot afford expensive tuition stay in Nigeria to attend schools that have outdated equipment, decaying buildings, subpar standards, and many other detrimental elements that harm our educational system.

Emergence of Incorrect Candidate

People suffer when the wrong candidate emerges, even if their candidacy is devoid of ambivalence, resentment, and eccentricities. Vote buying helps the wrong candidate win because money-bag politicians are determined to gain power at all costs. Keep in mind that if you sell your votes, you will lose out on some democratic rights and benefits. Every citizen has a right to all the benefits that the government is required to provide for its citizens. Every representative should be required to contribute to the development projects of their constituents. These initiatives are typically not completed because the persons who represent them are unqualified. They might have manipulated their way into the positions they have. Vote buying has been practiced in the past, albeit on a small scale and only in relation to pipelines, and was not as blatant as it is now.

Stagnation of Development

The problem of vote buying is detrimental to our 19 years of uninterrupted democracy and slows down development. Selling votes implies selling the social benefits that electorates would have received. Greedy politicians who offer the voters four to five thousand naira to vote for them have purchased the community's bad roads.

Massive threat to Democracy

The multiplying consequences of vote buying on Nigerian democracy have been strongly emphasized by academics. It should be remembered that in Nigeria, poor governance led to the military seizing control from the civilians. Because of military assaults, intimidation, and excessive censorship, it never boded well with the people who yearned for democracy. Why can't they refuse to buy votes for the public good and Nigerian democracy now that they are reaping the benefits of democracy? Negative Image: A nation needs to have a great reputation among other countries in order to draw its neighbours and

leaders from other countries to establish bilateral relations. Corruption and electoral offenses are blamed for the terrible reputation; Nigerians should avoid any behaviour that would harm our nation's reputation.

Poverty

According to the United Nations' estimate of poverty in Nigeria, the average Nigerian lives on less than \$1 per day. This validation is somewhat accurate because, if an assessment of poverty among Nigerians is made, you will agree with the UN's position. Nigeria is blessed with arable land, human and natural resources that if judiciously harnessed, would be competing with developed nations and our economy would be robust than we ever anticipated. The issue is that Nigerians were historically robbed of their ability to live better lives by corrupt government. Now is the time for Nigerians to elect reputable leaders whose goal is to reduce poverty by starting initiatives that directly benefit the public.

Dwindling life Expectancy

The reality of life is that if you have money, you can probably afford the needs of life, including quality medical care. However, in an emergency case, you risk easily dying if you have no money. Many people have died as a result of poor medical care. In Nigeria, malnutrition and starvation have contributed to the deaths of countless people (Yiaga Africa, 2018). For instance, the problem of young irregular migration in Nigeria resulted from individuals looking for a better life; hundreds of them died while foraging for greener pastures elsewhere. Those who would typically have had a longer life expectancy have passed away due to one issue or another.

Electoral Malpractice:

According to the Electoral Act of 2010, any person who, by themselves or by another person, at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives, provides, or pays money to or for any person with the intention of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote at such election, or on account of that person or any other person having voted at such election, or on account of that person or any other person having refrained from voting at such election, is liable for a fine of up to N100,000 or 12 months imprisonment or both. Vote buying will have a significant impact on the 2019 general elections. There will probably be significant frauds and irregularities. The wrong leaders will win the upcoming elections because they will utilize coercive tactics and aggressively escalate vote buying ploys to achieve their victory.

Conclusion

One of the elements working against Nigeria's democracy's longevity and political progress is vote-buying. The nation is implementing a "patronage democracy," which involves a carrot-and-stick arrangement between vote-buyers and vote-sellers to further commercialize politics. The amount of money used in the election flooded political development. Vote-buying is common in Nigeria because the average voter is poor and unable to resist the alluring effects of uncontrolled electoral enticements in cash or kind, wooing voters with alleged job opportunities, and the political elites' disposition to

capitalise on the weak-voters' unity in vulnerability to exploit the situation and render them politically powerless to control their rights to vote for candidates of their individual preference. The bane of development can be traced to the emergence of charlatans who runs the affairs of the state as though it is their private estates, and thus access to power implies an unhindered access to the nation's treasury, (Efebeh, 2017). Scholars have identified poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy as the main drivers of vote-buying. According to the study, vote-buying is inherently a derivation of election fraud. Vote buying is the root cause of bad governance and a facilitator of the imposition of the incorrect and incompetent group of unsalable individuals to fill positions in governance. The results of vote-buying include the insecurity of lives and property, ethnic division, secessionist agitations from numerous ethnic groupings, widespread bloodshed throughout the nation, and a severe infrastructural deficit. The menace breeds incompetent leadership, and incompetence breeds illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty. These revolve around the fact that, the monetization of politics makes it possible for only those who can afford to buy their ways through and not for those who can fix the societal problems. To that extent, mediocrity becomes the order of the day rather than competence.

Recommendations

Emphasis should be placed on the ability to bring legal action against the guilty parties and the aggressive fight against vote-buying. The government through INEC must look beyond rhetoric and take proactive measures against political parties, politicians, or their agents, as well as any delinquent anti-graft organization that has been found to have participated in vote-buying or assisted and abetted vote-trading. There is the urgent need to deploy modern technology to the Nigerian voting public such that electronic voting that would enable prospective voters to cast their vote at home using their phones. This way, the practice of buying votes by distributing money to prospective voters who are on queue waiting for their turns to vote would be totally eliminated. To stop electoral irregularities, the use of working card readers for identifying eligible voters must be maintained. To ensure that secret voting is not only a right but also a strict requirement that must be upheld during election times, the principle of ballot secrecy needs effective election legislation.

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