

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER IN CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *The paper is about the General Elections in Nigeria for 2015. Its conduct and general outcomes. It elucidates on its preparation, campaign promises, party manifestoes of the two major contesting parties — the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). Information from the electoral umpire — the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) puts the number of registered voters at 68.8 million, but only 28.2 million were actually accredited during the elections, and exercised their franchise. The INEC took democratic consolidation a notch further by the introduction of new technologies like the voter’s card reading machines employed to authenticate the bio-data of the bearer; replacement of temporary voter’s card with the permanent voter’s card. By all indices, the election was adjudged free and fair — this much was attested to by international election monitoring teams that monitored the exercised and confirmed that despite few glitches, the exercise met with international best practice.*

KEYWORDS: International Observer, Role, Election and Democracy Consolidation, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, like most post independent African states is mired in the crisis of under development. The crisis manifested itself in economic, social and political terms. The nation’s politics has become characterized by a winner takes all attitude resulting in violence, corruption, and the entertainment of what is known or called antidevelopment politics. Agreed that military and successive civilian administrations have contributed to this parlous state of affairs, yet the behaviour of Nigerian politicians leaves much to be desired. (Babatunde, 2007:53). Indeed, it can be emphatically asserted that between 1999-2015, there has been an absence of the politics of relevance in Nigeria. That is, politics geared towards the development of the nation and improvement in the material well-being of the generality of the people. This led to clarion call for change instead of continuity of the Peoples’ Democracy Party that ruled the country for sixteen years. The change can only come about through free and fair election under the watchful eyes of local and international observers. The 2015 general is very important because of the global ramification which will be discussed in the cause of this essay. It is interesting to know that elections which normally is a scheduled routine event in which citizens select those who take decisions on their behalf, have become almost the defining events in the Nigeria national life. That is, elections in Nigeria today are defined in terms such as do –or die, the capture of offices by all means. Yet, this is not unique to Nigeria. Globally, elections have acquired an iconic character and elections have become one of the most visible occupations across the global village. (Attahru. J. 2011:4) International election observers criss-cross the world today and increasingly

intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are actively engaging in election activities.

The need to study the 2015 general election in Nigeria is important because of the position the country occupies in Africa and the interest and respect which the international community have for the state. Also, the need to ascertain whether the independent national electoral commission has improved on the lapses that occurred during the last 2011 general elections. The 2011 election provoked massive anger, condemnations and allegation of electoral fraud of the polls. The study of 2015 general election is very vital in the sense that, it is proper to know whether the measures like card readers machines, permanent voters card, and computerized voters registered list (updated) actually reduced the incidence of electoral fraud in Nigeria. And to what extent the election was free and fair and conforms to the international standard as adjudge by the international observers. Above all, the role, action and assistances which the international observers rendered toward the success or failure of the election.

Study organization

This paper is organized into eight inter-related sections, section one is the Introduction. Section two Literature review and Theoretical underpinning, section three is about Research methodology that is the sampling methods and data gathering technique. Section four focuses on result obtain during the conduct of 2015 general election in Nigeria and findings of the international observers. Section five is on general discussion about the elections, while section six direct on the implications of Nigeria 2015 general for African states democracy and the Research Practice in particular. Section seven is on conclusion of the study and suggestion on the way forward. The last section is on the future research studies on African politics and democratic consolidation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the last decade, democracy can arguably be said to be the most sought after and yet the least understood system of government known to mankind. The collapse of the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe, the end of the cold war and an upsurge of natural agitations in many parts of the world seem to have opened the flood gates for new definition of the concept of democracy. (Tunde Babawale 2007:37) Schumpeter. J. (1943:15) defines it as an institutional agreement for arriving at political decisions in which individual acquires the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people's vote.

Dahl, R (1956:22) advances the argument further to make it inclusive of high level of civil liberties participations, and political pluralism. To sum up, what characterizes democracy, it has also been defined as "the government of the people by the people and for the people" (Edson Howard, 1960:11). It is clear from all these definitions that democracy has certain empirical referents which may be identified as follows: meaningful competitions among individuals and organized groups, especially the political parties for all the elective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force, a high level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies at least through regular and fair elections, and a level of civil and political liberties, freedom of expression freedom of the press, freedom to join organizations, sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.

Democratic Consolidation

“Literacy, the concept means an identifiable phase in the transition from authoritarian rule to civil rule and by extension of democratic systems that are germane and fundamental to the establishment and enthronelement of a stable, institutional and enduring democracy. Democratic consolidation therefore calls for the enthronelement of democracy as a system of organizing both societies and government and creating concomitant institutions. Essentially, arriving at a consolidated democracy require nurturing democratic values, ethics, principles and institutions in a mature sense that prevents a revert to hitherto authoritarian regime.” (Diamond Larry, 1997:7). This is also about test on successful transfer of power and democratic survival within a period of time. Therefore, Nigeria as a nation cannot shy away from the tenets of democratic consolidation. The players and supporters must abide by the poll verdict.

Election monitoring

Over the past decade, international monitoring and observation of election have increasingly become a necessity in the democratization processes in Nigeria and other developing countries. Whilst it can be argued that international monitoring exercise are not an entirely new development in Africa (Obi and Abutu, 1999:21), it is fair to maintain, however, that electoral monitoring and observation have, in recent years becomes something of a “growth business” (Geisla, 1993:46-47) especially in African countries that are in the process of transforming their political systems from military or one party dictatorship to multiparty democracy. Beyond Africa, however, elections have also been monitored in Europe, South America and Asia, in developing and industrial societies, as well as open and closed economies (Stack, 1993:21-22). Indeed, a number of well-known organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Commonwealth, the Organization of American states, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, as well as individual country such as United State of America, France and Britain have all been involved in this practice; as are various non-governmental organizations, notably among which are the Carter Center, the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

In many countries where attempts are being made to install democratic political systems, home-based or local monitoring organizations or groups are involved in monitoring. The activities of these local monitoring and observing organizations complement those of their foreign counterparts. For example, in Nigeria, which is the focus of this study, several election monitoring groups can be indentified that worked alongside their foreign counterparts during the 2003 general elections. Such group that easily come to mind include the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Freedom Organization of Nigeria (FON), Justice Development of Peace Committee (JSPS), Civil Society Organization (CSO), Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), and the Civil Liberty Organization (CLO), amongst others. Invariably, many of these domestic monitors received training as well as financial support from donor nations in Europe and North America.

It is apposite at this juncture to look into, if only briefly, the phenomenon of election monitoring and observation in Africa, with a view to illuminating the background against which it emerged as well as the purpose it is programmed to achieve or accomplish. But, first, what is election monitoring?

According to Bard-Andreassan et al (1992:120): Election monitoring is a form of action-oriented and participatory research, which is currently of great importance in those Third World countries which are in the process of transition from one party dictatorship to multiparty democracy. The main purpose of the monitoring is to objectively collect evidence of the electoral process in order to make an assessment of whether the process was democratic. The research is action-oriented in that the results are not merely of academic interest, but are intended to influence the situation in encouraging politicians to act democratically in encouraging public institutions to allow free and fair debate, in enabling voters to know their democratic rights.

Central to election monitoring is the critical role of confirming or contesting the result of an election, as well as determining how “free and fair” when certain electoral criteria have been met. For example, there should be no electoral fraud; election must be accompanied by freedom of press, free association and assembly, as well as relative peace. Above all, the most important function fulfilled by election monitoring is, according to Stack (1993), to establish an atmosphere of confidence in the electoral process.

Essentially, election monitoring can be categorised into three broad types (Stack, 1993:24) the first is linked to the process of decolonization. In this context, the assistance of foreign governments or international body is enlisted to administer and monitor elections in a newly independent country. This was the case in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s when, before the OAU's inception, several African countries were granted independence following UN-sponsored referenda or elections. The practice continued even after the formation of the defunct O.A.U (Gardner, 1993:2416). Indeed, Nigeria's general elections which ushered in the first republic were duly observed, as were also the general elections that marked the second republic.

The second type of election monitoring, which is the norm in the advanced democracies of the world, is when a state-appointed electoral commission officially monitors elections. In this situation, the monitoring exercise can be limited to nothing more than monitoring the actual vote count on Election Day. The third type of election monitoring occurs when elections are monitored in tandem by international and local non-governmental organizations. Many African countries are familiar with the type of election monitoring. As Stack has noted, this type of election monitoring only takes place in societies that are reformed or revolutionizing themselves out of non-democratic political system.

Election monitoring and observation are a key component of political conditionality. Political conditionality, according to Anike Hoogvelt (1997:177), is the deliberate use of “aid” to improve governance. It is an indirect way by the major Western countries and the multilateral financial institutions of creating an enabling environment for economic reforms (Barya, 1993; Robinson, 1993; Mkandawire, 1995, Hoogvelt, 1997). This is borne out of their conviction that economic liberalization will reduce the rule of the state and enhance pluralism (Ake, 2000; 44-46).

This explains why in Africa, for example, political conditionality became the standard fare for all the countries interested in getting further loans and grants from western donors and the Bretton Woods institution. The introduction of political conditionality marked a significant change in the way the West related to Africa. Prior to this time, western government and multilateral agencies were more concerned with consolidating their relations with repressive authoritarian regimes, rather than jeopardize their economic and strategic interest. Arguably,

this posture was a product of the cold war when, as Ake has pointed out, “most autocratic and corrupt regimes in Africa tended to be the most willing cold war allies for the simple reason that they needed external support to make up for their lack of legitimacy at home.” Against this background, it is hardly surprising that such authoritarian state as Zaire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Liberia received the lion’s share of United States aid to Africa between 1962 and 1988.

The 1990’s were, however characterized by significant ‘principled’ changes in the way the West related to Africa. This ‘repositioning’ has been attributed to a host of factors that were then unfolding on both the international and domestic scenes. To begin with, the Soviet Union had collapsed and the cold war had ended. A corollary of this historic event was what Ake (2000:138) has termed the “capitalist” revolution in Eastern Europe. This former communist empire experienced an unprecedented wind of democratic change. Countries like Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria embraced democracy and human rights. Meanwhile, Yugoslavia broke into separate independent states. Czechoslovakia split into two to form Czech and Slovakia, as the former soviet union fragmented, embracing democracy human rights and the rule law. It was also during this period that East Germany, another staunch ally of the defunct Soviet Union, became united with capitalist and democratic West Germany.

The spectacle of the long, dramatic and largely successful democratic struggles that happened after the breakup of the Soviet Union convinced the West that liberal democracy was feasible everywhere and western nations began to be sensitive to democracy’s possibilities even in Africa. Despite these seeming possibilities that Africa held out for democracy, certain problems still remained that might hinder the fruition of the democratization processes; this is attributable to the mounting disappointments among western governments and donor agencies at the failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) being implemented by many African countries. SAP recommendations generally involved, among other things, the devaluation of national currencies, drastic reduction in state expenditure, privatization of state-owned enterprises and liberalization of the trade regime (Mkandawire, 1995 (etal) p:62-64).

Thus, during the 1980s, western government and multilateral institutions became increasingly strident and outspoken in their preference of electoral multiparty democracy as a precondition of further loans and grants (Hoogvelt, 1997:173). Various scholars (Amuwo; 1993 and other scholars) have documented how, from the early 1990s, issues of democratization and human rights began to dominate the West’s interest in Africa. In 1999, for example, the European Union formally adopted political conditionality as an “aid regime principle.” In 1992, under the auspices of USAID, the United States added a ‘democracy initiative,’ for its part the World Bank began to emphasize, as well as link economic assistance to “good governance” which it defined in terms of an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts, the accountable administration of public fund, an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature, respect for the rule of law and human rights at all levels of government, a pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press. Although the World Bank was not explicit about this, these requirements, in the words of one analyst, amounted to a comprehensive statement of the minimum institutional, legal and political conditions of liberal democracy (Leftwich, 1993:10).

Given the prevailing mood in the west and in the light of the changes in the global political environment, the United Nations was to accept the idea that the recognition and free exercise

of democratic rights, namely the right to vote in free and fair election, is a prerequisite for the recognition of the will of the people as the basis for governance. Accordingly, on December 18, 1990, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 45/150 and General Assembly resolution 45/151, respectively. According to the first Resolutions “the authority to govern shall be based on the will of people, as expressed in periodic and genuine election.” The latter affirmed, *inter alia*, that “any extraneous activities and attempt, directly or indirectly, to interfere in the free development of national electoral processes” constituted a violation of the United Nations Charter. It therefore urged state “to refrain from financing or providing, directly or indirectly, any form of covert support for political parties or groups.”

In 1991, the United Nations General Assembly adopted another Resolution. With this resolution, the Secretary General’s initiative in setting up an office to handle election monitoring and other ancillary functions was fully endorsed. It is possible to explain this apparent contradiction contained in the UN resolutions as an attempt by the inter-governmental organization to align itself with the political changes that were emerging in the west in relation to democratization in Africa. It is also possible to argue that the two resolutions (i.e. Resolution 45/150 and 45/151) were products of a visceral concern for the preservation of the national sovereignty and prevention of undue intervention in the internal affairs of states, particularly Third World states.

This argument is plausible, when viewed within the context in which the above resolutions were adopted. However, the adoption of Resolution 46/137 of 1991, which itself is a function of the prevailing changes in the international political environment, seriously undermined these initial resolutions. As Nwokedi (1996: 201) has maintained, “the intention of this particular resolution was certainly pre-emptive but in reality, the government and the groups in this category of countries have solicited aid and have in turn received this necessary assistance from the international donor community in support of elections.”

As the foregoing has shown, election monitoring and observation have increasingly become an important method of external involvement in the democratic processes in African states and Nigerian in particular. They have nonetheless, gained increasing international acceptability and recognition in terms of the roles they can play in promoting human rights in countries undergoing democratic transitions. It is in the lights of this that international observation of elections has been requested by the opposition and welcomed, or at least tolerated, by the regime in Power (Adreassen, 1993:122).

Theoretical underpinning

In this section the paper will highlight relevant theoretical theories that are appropriate to the study such as representative, development and peace democratic theory. The section will also justify while the peace democratic study is pertinent and relevant to the research work.

In this section, various scholars postulations on peace ideas would be discussed, most especially, theories on representative, sovereignty, development and peace democratic theory. Attempt will also be made to justify why peace democratic theory is pertinent and relevant to the study. Democracy is the most familiar concept in many political discourses. It has not only attracted more attention and fascinated considerable academic and intellectual dialogue than any other social and political concept in the past two centuries. In fact, all other

politically and socially significant issues like; justice, human rights, rule of law, good governance, poverty and development are discussed within the purview of democracy.

Paradoxically, democracy has generated more academic and intellectual polemics than any other social and political concepts in the recent time. Today, there is hardly any country that can make a public statement that is not government by the people (Kaur 2007:218). It is uncommon to see regimes with authoritarian character and fascist traits laying claim to democracy. According to a report from the Economist Intelligent Unit (2010), 55 countries constituting about 36.5% of the world population purported to be democratic are classified as authoritarian regimes. Despite the vagueness in its meaning and ambiguities in its practice, attempts have been made by scholars to define the concept and theorise the practice.

In its classical sense: democracy is a Greek word which means, 'people rule' or 'ruled by the people'. Democracy in this sense is primarily concerned with who should rule and who should decide who rules. By implication democracy means the acceptance of the basic equality of men as humans and the basic responsibility of all adult men and women for their own destiny. Democracy cannot be divorced from equality (Eskor Toyo: 1994:9). Beyond equality, for Karl Popper (cited in Oguejiofor 2003:26) democracy means, the ability of the people to send packing, an unwanted government through majority vote. In a democracy, the will of the people is the basis and legitimacy of power, authority which is to advance their interest (Agyeman 2003:333-352). In this regards popular sovereignty is the hallmark of democracy. It is the extension of the sovereign will of the people to every facet and issue of socio-political importance, or the general body politics that; Agyeman (2003:334) refers to as "true or moral democracy". However, acceptability and participatory government through the majority principle is limited in practice since not every citizen can actively participate in the decision making and running of government (Chidam'odzi 2003:367).

Representative Theory

The principle of representation is very critical for modern democracy. This is because, contemporary states; "involve large demographic and population sizes, multiculturalism, multiplicity and complexity of interests, maturity and age-related conditions for active participation" (Chidam'odzi 2003:367). Hence, democracy in its classical sense the principle of popular participation sense has become practically impossible today because of the size of the contemporary polity. This is far higher than the Athenian city-state which is closer to the realization of the ideal of popular participation.

In order to overcome the challenges posed by the size, complexity and multicultural nature of the modern state, political theorists have come out with different philosophies, models and variant of democracy; all of which could not be discussed here. According to David Held (2006:183) "democratic theory is in a state of flux. There are almost as many differences among thinkers within each of the major strands of political analysis, as there are, traditions themselves". Broadly however, democracy can be seen within the prism of participatory, liberal or representative, and social democracy. Participatory democracy strives to create opportunities. Participation of citizens is at the very heart of the idea of democracy especially citizens committed to democratic values. Mindful of their civic duties those who become involved in political activities are the lifeblood of any modern democratic system.

Democracy experienced great transformation by the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was beginning to be thought of as the right of citizens, to participate in the

determination of the collective will of the people through the medium of elected representatives. Participatory democracy complements and strengthens representative democracy: decision-making remains first and foremost legitimized by the legislature. Participation is an indispensable complement of representative democracy.

Theory of Sovereignty (Liberal School)

Modern liberal democratic theories have constantly sought to justify sovereign power of the state, while at the same time, justifying limits on that power. Liberal or representative democracy is a system of rule embracing elected officials who undertake to represent the interest or views of citizens within the framework of the rule of law. To count as liberal, democratic regimes must meet a certain standard of electoral accountability, and provide some level of constitutionally protected liberties to their citizens (Vernon 2001:1). This is the limited sense in which many people have conceived democracy today and one which has gained wider acceptance among the countries of the world (Ogundiya 2008:69-80). Liberal democracy therefore, is a constitutional theory which services to justify political system that rests on a combination of certain practices, namely: the accountability and restraint of government. Since the advent of the irresistible third wave in the early seventies in transitional democracies, scholars have paid considerable attention to three general goals: “fostering free and fair competitive elections, held among multiple parties and candidates; building civil society, with programmes designed to assist grassroots organisations, citizen advocacy groups and independent media, strengthening the core institutions of the state by encouraging independent judiciaries as well as effective legislature, and efficient bureaucracy” (Norris 2005:24). Despite the concerted efforts to ensure the sustenance of democracy in the developing countries and other new democracies, the wind of reversal has considerably eroded the gains of the third wave. Much of these winds of reversal are a function of undeveloped democratic structures and institutions among which political parties appear very critical.

Democratic Consolidation Discourse

Democratic consolidation has become a pivotal concept in comparative politics (Schedler .A. 2001 and Olaleye 2004:31-32). Originally, the idea of democratic consolidation was first introduced as a concept for addressing the challenges of regime stabilization and provides an answer to the vital question: when are democracies secure from breakdown? (Olaleye, 2004:214). There seem to be a serious confusion about the precise meaning of democratic consolidation. For clarity and in order to avoid analytical confusion this essay will adopt the classical and most widespread definition that considers a democratic regime to be consolidated when it is likely to endure (O’Donnell 1996:37). This narrow conceptualization that equates consolidation of democracy with expectations of regime continuity has been criticized on the grounds that:

“First, it is negative, in the sense that its implicit normative goal is to avoid authoritarian regressions, rather than to achieve superior levels of democracy. Second, it is forward-looking, in so far as it does not refer to historical records of democratic stability, but rather, to current expectations of future regime stability. Third, it adopts an external observer perspective that relies on, expert judgments about the life expectancy of democratic regimes, rather than adopting an internal participant perspective that relies on, the subjective expectations of political elites and citizens”. (Schedler 2001:67)

Collier (2002:70) suggested that, approaches to defining consolidation fall into three categories: actor-centered, event centered and institutional (external and internal). The actor centered approach focuses on the willingness of the significant actors to work within democratic rules. The event centered approach looks at elections or constitutional ratifications as markers. An internal institutional approach focuses on the degree of institutionalization, while an external approach concentrates on the duration of new political institutions and the extent of meaningful changes therein (cited in Power and Powers 1988). None of these approaches is mutually exclusive in that, there are causal relationships among the actors. Importantly, the study of democratic consolidation tends to be influenced by the peculiarity of the country under study. For example, in transiting societies where the threat of coup persists, consolidation may be seen as the process of eliminating opposition to democracy on the part of the powerful actors.

The basic ingredient for democratic sustenance is the legitimacy which democracy enjoys as a system of governance. For democracy to be legitimized, it must make sense to the people. The process of legitimizing democracy is often times referred to as consolidation; this is really determined by a number of factors. Scholars have argued that movement toward democracy depends on the existence within society, of certain preconditions that may be economic, social or political in nature. These scholars hypothesized that the level of a country's economic development independently affects the orientations conducive to the democracy status of its citizens. In essence, the level of economic growth affects the cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations of the citizens and fundamentally, their psycho-political perceptions of the system. These orientations have a direct linkage to whether the citizen will support or withdraw their allegiance to the system. In essence, though this approach emphasized the role of the economy, it does not fail to appreciate the impact of its cultural legitimacy and suitable institutions (Kaur 2007:219).

Development Theory and Democracy Discourse

Development is a social transformation of society on a gradual process. Benjamin Nwabueze, (2009:6) posit that development is an advancement in the social way of living, including economic and political system. It centres on gradual change and response to internal and external factors that accelerate development. Democracy and democratic consolidation are catalysts for national development in the contemporary world. Alli Wariz (2006:14) posit that democracy is about improvement of the society; that a state or nation that wants to improve on its social-political existence need democratic system of governance. Fufuyuma A. (2007:15) posited that democracy and development goes together, society that want to overcome her political challenges cannot do without democracy, it is an ingredient for socio-economic development, peace and stability. The previous political system of government like oligarchy, dictatorship and autocratic style of administration breed despotic leader which on the long run promote social discontent and political instability. There is no alternative to modernization of human society through gradual development based on democratic practice. Western Europe, United States and China are politically and economically stable today because of stable democracy and good leadership.

The Value and Constraint of Democracy in Nigeria

For J.S. Mill (1936:31): "for democracy to endure there must be some shared values". The heterogeneity prevailing in terms of religion or ethnicity was regarded by him as factors that make regimes less stable (cited in Prezeworski et al 2000:125). Within the context of

Nigeria's experience, this argument could be adjudged to be valid. Since 1999 when the country returned to democracy, particularly the electoral type, ethnic chauvinism and intermittent religious crises have posed serious challenges to the nation's fledgling democracy. Politically, irresolute issues like militancy in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram (western education is sin) in the north east and part of the north central political regions, the ethno-religious crises in Jos Plateau state among others, have hampered democratic stability. However, the thesis that maintains the inextricable connections between social heterogeneity has also been considered to be lame. Scholars pointed to some heterogeneous societies like India that have been able to sustain democracy. In this regard, it will be politically heretical and theoretically disingenuous to argue that social heterogeneity is, "a sole factor that hampers democratic consolidation. There is no society that is strictly homogenous. Social heterogeneity does not symbolize ideological homogeneity and no homogenous society is exclusively monolithic. Heterogeneity or plurality only becomes a political or democratic liability when the state is deficient of viable institutions and mechanisms to mediate and mitigate conflicts among competing and conflicting interest in the society. This is true of Nigeria and other developing democracies in Africa. Nonetheless, societal cohesion and socio-political stability is a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation.

Beyond the socio-political factors, a supposedly democratic state must have viable and supportive political and democratic institutions (Huntington 1996: et al, p.42-44). Political institutions deemed important to the consolidation of democracy include: parliament, the presidency, judiciary, political parties, interest associations and the role of the armed forces among others. The prevalence of political institutions in a society provides viable channels for reconciling competing interests through a non-violent means. A vibrant executive arm, well institutionalized legislature and independent and incorruptible judiciary are important in this regard. Moreover, impartial and independent electoral umpire and well established party system are also indispensable to democratic consolidation. All these institutions enhance and promote democratic accountability and make government responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the entire citizenry. Thus, according to Chabal (cited in Kaur 2007) "any deficiency in the quality of elections or the functioning of the parliamentary system invalidates democratic accountability" which is a *sine qua non* for democratic legitimization and consolidation. Unwholesome party politics, characterized by political party fragmentation, stifling of opposition parties and general poor developed party structures also stifles democracy.

If democracies are to weather the storms of history and limit the self aggrandizing impulses of human actors, then what is needed is strong and well designed political institutions. However, it may be emphasized that it is not merely presence of institutions that would lead to stability. What is also essential is that they must be developed to a level that other ties of association become less important as was seen in the west, where democratization took place after the nation state.

Johnston (2005:5) argues that;

Open, competitive, and fair participation within a framework of legitimate, credible institutions enables citizens and groups to defend their interests, to act on issues they care about, and to hold officials accountable for their decisions. Institutions enlivened by contentions among socially rooted interests can moderate conflict; aggregate demands into public policy backed by a working consensus, and earn legitimacy. Political parties are

among the most crucial institutions in these processes. Parties embody both participation and institutions, and they are essential for negotiating a balance between them.

Therefore, with the benefit of hindsight, it can be contended incontrovertibly that, weak and unsupportive political institutions largely accounted for the failure of Nigeria's democracy in the first and second republics. The present wave of reversal sweeping against the present democratic experiment in Nigeria is not unconnected with the undeveloped democratic institutions in Nigeria.

Democratic Peace Theory

Democratic peace theory is a theory which posits that democracies are hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other identified democracies. In contrast to theories explaining war engagement, it is a "theory of peace" outlining motives that dissuade state-sponsored violence.

Some theorists prefer terms such as "mutual democratic pacifism" or "inter-democracy nonaggression hypothesis" so as to clarify that a state of peace is not singular to democracies, but rather that it is easily sustained between democratic nations.

Among proponents of the democratic peace theory, several factors are held as motivating peace between liberal states:

- Democratic leaders are forced to accept culpability for war losses to a voting public;
- Publicly accountable statesmen are more inclined to establish diplomatic institutions for resolving international tensions;
- Democracies are less inclined to view countries with adjacent policy and governing doctrine as hostile;
- Democracies tend to possess greater public wealth than other states, and therefore eschew war to preserve infrastructure and resources. (http://ent.wikipedia.org/wiki/democraticpeace_theory 24/05/15 pp.2-4)

Though the democratic peace theory was not rigorously or scientifically studied until the 1960s, the basic principles of the concept had been argued as early as the 1700s in the works of philosopher Immanuel Kant (1924:36) and political theorist Thomas Paine. Kant foreshadowed the theory in his essay *Perpetual Peace* written in 1795, although he thought that a world with only constitutional republics was only one of several necessary conditions for a perpetual peace. Kant's theory was that a majority of the people would never vote to go to war, unless in self-defense. Therefore, if all nations were republics, it would end war, because there would be no aggressors. In earlier but less cited works, Thomas Paine (1976:16-18) made similar or stronger claims about the peaceful nature of republics. Paine wrote in "Common Sense" in 1776: "The Republics of Europe are all (and we may say always) in peace." Paine argued that kings would go to war out of pride in situations where republics would not. *Democracy in America* (1835-1840), by French historian and social scientist *Alexis de Tocqueville*, also argued that democratic nations were less likely to wage war. (wikidemocraticpeace_theory Ibid p.5)

Democratic Peace Theory Debate

The democratic peace theory (or liberal peace theory or simply the democratic peace) holds that democracies — usually, liberal democracies — never or almost never go to war with one another.

The original theory and research on wars has been followed by many similar theories and related research on the relationship between democracy and peace, including that lesser conflicts than wars are also rare between democracies and that systematic violence is in general less common within democracies.

The democratic peace theory has been extremely divisive among political scientists. It is rooted in the idealist and classical liberalist traditions and is opposed to the previously dominant theory of realism. However, democratic peace theory has come to be more widely accepted and has in some democracies effected policy change.

Presidents of both the major United States parties have expressed support for the theory. Former President Bill Clinton of the Democratic Party: “Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don’t attack each other”. Former President George W. Bush of the Republican Party: “And the reason why I’m so strong on democracy is democracies don’t go to war with each other. And the reason why the people of most societies don’t like war, and they understand what war means... I’ve got great faith in democracies to promote peace. And that’s why I’m such a strong believer that the way forward in the Middle East, the broader Middle East, is to promote democracy.” The United States Congress has passed the Advance Democracy Act which states: “Wars between or among democratic countries are exceedingly rare, while wars between and among nondemocratic countries are commonplace, with nearly 170,000,000 people having lost their lives because of the policies of totalitarian governments”.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study on “Role of International observers in the consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria: A case of 2015 general election is an exploratory design study. It is also an action oriented project, and content analysis in character. The study is an academic intellectual exercise in the area of political science administration that requires careful study and proper documentations of issues that makes (or) mar democracy process in Nigeria. The survey on the conduct of 2015 general election cut across different geo-political culture in Nigeria. The paper is on need for Nigeria to take democratic elections serious, because without peaceful transition to democratic rule, Nigeria cannot achieve meaningful development. This make the study timely and prime importance.

Research Location and Coverage Area

The study took place in Nigeria between March– May 2015, the study cover Eighteen states out of Thirty Six state of Nigeria. (Pre-Election arrangement and Post Election Situation). This paper covered the following eighteen states:

South West: Lagos and Oyo and the Ekiti State, **South East:** Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi State, **South-South:** Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State, **North East:** Adamawa, Gombe and Borno State, **North Central:** Benue, Niger and Plateau State, **North West:** Sokoto, Kano and Katstina State. (2000 people from each of the state chosen.

Sampling Techniques

The study adopted cluster sampling techniques because of the nature of the research study which is political administration in nature, and the respondents are located in different states. The researcher and the team of assistants used. Questionnaire Opinion polls and also conducted Interviews with some political actors especially members of four major political parts in different capital cities of Nigeria. The political parties are People's Democratic Party, All Progressive Congress, Labour Party and Advance Progressive Grand Alliance. The researcher also corroborates its findings with secondary sources that is extraction of information from text books, conferences, seminars, and symposia on general elections in Nigeria. The paper also benefitted from the Independent Electoral Commission report on previous elections in Nigeria particularly 2011 general election. This is with the view to determining whether 2015 general election is fair and better than the 2011 general elections.

Research Instrument

In view of the nature of research study and in order to get to the root of discussion; the research study used four instruments. Namely:

- (a) Questionnaire Opinion Polls
- (b) Interview Survey
- (c) Secondary Publication materials and the
- (d) INEC Documents

A Sample Population of 2000 people were taken and evenly distributed across the eighteen states of Nigeria. The target groups are students of higher institutions, public servants and literate traders and the artisans in the states earlier mentioned. The population sample is limited to this number because of cost and time factors. The researcher also consulted the work of other scholars as a base for which to start the study. The Questionnaire was carefully administered through selected local government areas in the 18 states.

Sampling Error

Sampling error of 20 out of 100 people is taken, this mean that from Four hundred (400) people out of two thousand (2000) people in the Eighteen states as chosen pilot study. This to some extend give the paper an elements of confidence building level, with marginal error.

Result Interpretation

The paper used simple descriptive statistics technique and Qualitative expression and simple percentage analyses to calculate the result of the data obtained from the field study.

Time Framework

The essay was executed within twelve weeks: March – May 2015.

THE CONDUCT OF 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The Preparation for 2015 General Election

This section is the heart of the paper, it comprises of various steps taken to ensure that Nigeria conduct a free and fair election. The last section 4.8 analysed the presidential election result as contested by the parties.

About twenty political parties contested for various seats in the elections. The elections was in two phases; March 28, 2015 featured the Presidential Election, the Senate and the House of Representatives elections. Next were the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly which took place in April 11, 2015. The Elections were about the future of Nigeria generally believe to be the most populous nation of the black people. That is also why stakeholders and also International Observers has high expectation and glimmer of hope that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should not disappoint Nigerians and the International Community. Above all, that the parties endeavour to obey the Electoral Commission rules and guidelines for the conduct of free and fair election in Nigeria.

Preparation for the Elections

Before the 2015 General Election, the Independent National Electoral Commission in March 2014 issued a statement urging political parties and their supporters to go and register at the local government area closer to their residence. The electoral commission also asked the local government officials to assist in the revision of the voter's registration list. This is to remove duplication of names and registration of new names to accommodate those who have attained the age of 18 years between 2011 and 2015 respectively.

In December 2014, the Independent National Electoral Commission also issued a final circular to Local Government Councils to update the voters Registered List before submitting the same to their state office for final collation. The revision of voters registered list is the bed-rock for fair and free election. It shows the comprehensive list of those registered and eligible to vote. After all said and done about Sixty Eight Million People were adjudged registered for the 2015 general elections in Nigeria through the permanent voters card collection introduced by the electoral commission. About five million people could not collect their permanent voters card (PVCs). There were duplication of names in the register while some people have relocated to another town or state. The Electoral Commission could not also make adequate provision for the physically challenged; however, they were able to accommodate internally displaced persons from the North Eastern part of Nigeria (Boko Haram Victims). The Electoral Commission also embarked on dissemination of information about the elections publicly to Nigerians. To guide against multiple registration, electoral malpractices and double voting, the Electoral Commission also introduced Card Reader Device and Permanent Voters Cards.

Voting Guidelines and Electoral Offences and penalties were published in some Nigerian Newspapers. Please see the summary below:

2015 General Elections Guidelines

STEP 1: Go to the polling Unit you were registered with your voters registration card (PVC's). On arrival present your voters card to the Presiding Officer (PO) for processing and

verification, identification and authentication through the card reader device. The card reader will show the bio-data of the voter.

STEP 2: After presentation of the voter registration card, to the INEC official ensure that your name is on the register; the INEC official will proceed to the next step to confirm whether the owner of the PVC is actually the owner of the card. All the accredited voters are given a number after the verification.

STEP 3: This is the marking of the finger with indelible ink to show that the voters has been accredited.

STEP 4: Before voting, the voter will mention the number given to him/her during the accreditation, this will guide the polling Officer (PO) to check through the INEC register that it was the same person that was accredited.

STEP 5: If confirmed that he/she is the same person accredited earlier, the (PO) will issue three ballot papers, presidential Red, Senate Black, and House of Representative Green to the voter to go and exercise his/her franchise.

STEP 6: The voters proceed to the polling booth to cast his/her in the three ballot boxes already provided for the election.

STEP 7: After the last person has voted; the polling officer will sort out the ballot papers in the three boxes.

STEP 8: The voter is expected to wait for the counting and the announcement of the results.

STEP 9: At the end of the counting, the (PO) would announce the results at the polling station and place around the station. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) also published election offences and penalties and gave political parties permission to publish their manifestoes in Newspapers.

POLITICAL PARTIES MANIFESTO FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: A CASE OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND ALL PROGRSSIVES CONGRESS MANIFESTO OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

Our Manifesto's Guiding Principles

We of the People Democratic Party (PDP) of Nigeria, conscious of our historic mission to build a modern democratic state, founded on justice, equity and fair play.

Realizing the need to:

- Make fundamental break with past mistakes in order to realize the optimum potentials of the country.
- Build a qualitatively better society based on the principles of democracy, human rights and social justice under the rule of law.

Committed to:

- Restructuring Nigeria in the spirit of true federalism and responsible tiers of government, so as to achieve a just and equitable society.
- Resolving such fundamental issues as proper devolution of powers between the three tiers of government.

Covenant as follows:

- **The indivisibility of the Nigerian Polity**

We affirm our belief in the unity of Nigeria under the Federal System of Government. We shall, therefore, continuously promote political tolerance, accommodation and compromise, religious harmony, as well as inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic accommodation and co-operation. The party shall also promote geographical balancing as a fundamental principle of power sharing in the country, in line with the principle of federal character. The party shall uphold the principle of power rotation in our polity at all levels.

- **Supremacy of the Constitution**

We affirm our belief in the supremacy of the constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria and the sovereignty of the Nigerian nation and its people. We hereby affirm our commitment to strict observance and enforcement of the provisions. As a political party, we shall conform to the spirit and the letter of the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the constitution of the Peoples Democratic Party.

- **Independence of the judiciary and Operation of the Rule of law.**

We affirm our belief in the supremacy of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the sovereignty of the Nigerian nation and its people. We hereby affirm our commitment to strict observance and enforcement of the provisions. As a political party, we shall conform to the spirit and the letter of the provisions of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the constitution of the Peoples Democratic Party.

- **Sanctity of Human Dignity**

We affirm belief in respect of fundamental human rights, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution and International Protocols and Conventions. We are against all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, place of origin, or ethnicity, race, beliefs, etc. The PDP will strive to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in society, including women, children, senior citizens, physically-challenged and minority.

- **Directive Principles**

We shall remain strongly committed to:

- i. Democracy and good governance
- ii. Freedom, Human rights and human dignity
- iii. Justice, equity, popular participation, inclusiveness and the rule of law.
- iv. Integrity, transparency and accountability in the conduct of public affairs
- v. Sustainable development through the creation of an enabling environment for private sector led economic development.

● **Direction of Policy And Measures**

Political Objective: The political objective of the Peoples Democratic Party is to:

- i. Seek political power for the purpose of protecting the territorial integrity of Nigeria and promoting the security, safety, welfare and well-being of all Nigerians.
- ii. Promote and establish Political stability in Nigeria and foster national unity and integration while safeguarding our culture and our values.
- iii. Provide good Governance that ensures probity and participatory democracy
- iv. Guarantee human right and fundamental freedoms of all citizens and persons resident in Nigeria.
- v. Promote and nurture democratic ideals and traditions on a sustainable basis.
- vi. Provide the political environment that is conducive to economic growth and national development through private initiative and free enterprise.
- vii. Offer equal opportunities to hold the highest political, military, bureaucratic and judicial offices in the country to all citizens, and protect, defend and safeguard the interests of all, including minorities.

Governance

The party shall be committed to:

- i. The principle of participatory democracy that lays emphasis on the welfare of our people.
- ii. The principles of social justice and the equality of opportunities for all citizens.
- iii. The promotion and defense of the Nigerian Federal System of government.
- iv. The principles of accountability and transparency in order to restore confidence in the institutions of government, discipline and leadership by example as basis for public life and personal integrity as an important moral value in the conduct of public affairs.
- v. Fostering the spirit of oneness among our people by treating all Nigerians fairly and equitably, regardless of their social, political or economic status; and
- vi. The preservation of Nigeria as a multi-religious state whilst guaranteeing freedom of religion and good conscience.

Economy

At the root of Nigeria's political and social problems is poverty and low access to economic opportunities. The improvement in the well-being of Nigerians is the ultimate objective of the PDP's economic policy, and make accessible to every Nigerian the basic needs of life.

The focus would be to create a market-based economy driven by small and medium scale businesses and regulated by a reformed public sector. At the very foundation of the above objective of the party is the pursuit of a strong, virile and diversified economy built to stem

rural urban migration through investment in modern agricultural methods. (See PDP manifesto 1999)

APC'S Manifesto

National Security

Urgently address capacity building of law enforcement agents in terms of quantity and quality as this is critical in safeguarding the sanctity of lives and property; Establish a well-trained, adequately equipped and goals driven Serious Crime Squad to combat terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, militants, ethno-religious and communal clashes nationwide.

Begin widespread consultations to amend the Constitution to enable States and Local Governments to employ State and Community Police to address the peculiar needs of each community. This would mean setting boundaries for Federal, State and Community Police through new Criminal Justice legislation to replace the Criminal Code, the Penal Code and the Police Act.

Push for more support in the security and economic stability of the sub-region (ECOWAS) and AU as a whole and maintain a strong, close and frank relationship with West Africa, South Africa, UK, USA, Canada, and other African countries.

Conflict Resolution, National Unity, Social Harmony

Establish a Conflict Resolution Commission to help prevent, mitigate and resolve civil ethnic conflicts within the polity;

Bring permanent peace and solution to the Niger Delta and other conflict prone areas such as Plateau, Taraba, Bauchi, Borno and Abia in order to engender national unity and social harmony; Initiate policies to ensure that Nigerians are free to live and work in any part of the country by removing state of origin, tribe, ethnic and religious affiliations and replace those with state of residence.

Job Creation and the Economy

- Maintain sound macro-economic policy environment, run an efficient government and preserve the independence of the Central Bank;
- Restore and strengthen financial confidence by putting in place a more robust monitoring, supervising and regulating of all financial institutions;
- Make our economy one of the fastest growing emerging economies in the world with a real GDP growth averaging 10% annually;
- Embark on vocational training, entrepreneurial and skills acquisition scheme for graduates along with the creation of Small Business Loan Guarantee Scheme to create at least 1 million new jobs every year, for the foreseeable future;
- Integrate the informal economy into the mainstream and prioritize the full implementation of the National Identification Scheme to generate the relevant data;

- Expand domestic demand and consider undertaking associated public works programmes; Embark on export and production diversification including investment in infrastructure;
- promote manufacturing through agro based industries and expand sub-regional trade through ECOWAS and AU;
- Make Information Technology, Manufacturing, Agriculture and Entertainment key drivers of our economy; Balance the economy across regions by the creation of 6 new Regional Economic Development Agencies (REDAs) to act as champions of sub-regional competitiveness;
- Put in place a N300bn regional growth fund (average of N50bn in each geo-political region) to be managed by the REDAs, encourage private sector enterprise and support to help places currently reliant on the public sector;
- Amend the Constitution and the Land Use Act to create freehold/leasehold interests in land along with matching grants for states to create a nationwide electronic land title register on a state by state basis;
- Create additional middle-class of at least 2 million new homeowners in our first year in government and 1 million annually thereafter; by enacting a national mortgage system that will lend at single digit interest rates for purchase of owner-occupier houses.

Agriculture and Food Security

- Modernise the sector and change Nigeria from being a country of self-subsistence farmers to that of a medium/commercial scale farming nation/producer; Create a nationwide food inspectorate division with a view to improving nutrition and eliminating food-borne hazards;
- Inject extra N30bn to the Agricultural sector to create more agro-allied jobs by way of loans at nominal interest rates for capital investment on medium and commercial scale cash crops;
- Guarantee a minimum price for selected crops and facilitate storage of agricultural products as and when necessary.

Industrialization

Formulate a robust industrialisation policy and provide a conducive environment for a private sector led industrial base for the economy, promote entrepreneurship that would help usher in new industries, new jobs, new knowledge and utilization of information and communication technologies. Create growth centers through the promotion of industrialisation in all regions by encouraging the use of local resources.

Promote innovation by investing heavily in research, development, science and technology. Support diversification of our economy from export of primary materials to value added goods through supporting the establishment of a solid industrial base. Ensure that key agricultural products such as cocoa and rubber go through value addition as opposed to exporting raw materials for industries in other countries.

Other areas are infrastructure; oil and gas industry; healthcare; senior citizens, youth, sport and culture, women empowerment; and environment.

Statistics of Eligible Voters for 2015 General Elections

The Independent National Electoral Commission Chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega said on Tuesday January 13, 2015 that 68.8 million people are eligible to vote in 2015 General Election. The number of voters is about five million less than the 2011 figure of 73.5 million people. About 30.8 million Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) are yet to be collected. The INEC has made arrangement with the state for distributions of the uncollected Permanent Voters Cards and extension of collection days to include weekend, that is Saturday and Sunday. This was the situation before the Independent National Electoral Commission decided to change the date of the election from Saturday, February 14, 2015, to March 28, 2015 for security reason. And also to allow people to go and collect their voters card. The shift in the election date also allow the two major contended parties, People Democratic Party and All Progressives Congress to continue with their campaign and rallies for the general election. Between February 15, and March 26, 2015 about five million people collected their Permanent Voters Cards at various locations in Nigeria including internally displaced people (IDPs).

(a) Polls: 2015 Campaign Promises and Dilemma of Making the Right Choice

Before Independent national Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman, Athahiru Jega announced the shift in the date of election, from February 28, 2015 to March 28 and April 11, 2015 respectively, the leading contenders and their spoke persons had criss-crossed the country and made various pledges to the electorate. Expectedly, people listened to enable them make right choices at the polls as a matter of fact; the voters have been the beautiful brides. The two leading political parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) launched ambitious manifesto in October, 2014. When INEC lifted the ban on political campaign both parties organized shadow elections, where their standard bearers emerged.

The parties had traversed the length and breadth of the land to market their programmes to the electorate. The former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP and the current president General Muhammadu Buhari of APC and twelve other presidential aspirants hopefully made overtures and sway the voter preference.

Some of the parties pledges beyond what their parties manifestos offer.

All Progressive Congress: The party anchors its political slogan on word "change"; it resolves to stop what it calls a drift of the country towards failure. The party said, change is inevitable if Nigeria must be salvaged from the present political economic decay. The party also promises sustained implementation of people oriented programmes with particular emphasis on War Against Poverty, Integrated Rural Development, Rapid Industrial Growth, Excellence in Education, Science and Technology, Rebuilding and Expanding Basic Infrastructure.

The People's Democratic Party also promised similar things and presents the administration scorecard in the following sectors, Aviation, Education, Roads Building, Medical Facilities, Agriculture and Science and Technology and Science and Technology. The former president

appealed to the Nigerian electorate to allow him to continue on the good foundation the party has laid and visible for all to see.

The two political parties could not proffer feasible solution to the issue of corruption. The two parties' promises look similar; this is a dilemma for the electorate to choose the right party to vote for.

Next to insecurity and corruption that has become issues of the campaign, both former president Jonathan and General Muhammadu Buhari also assured Nigeria to swing into action, immediately they win the election.

People's Comments

However, Nigerians expressed fears over the accountability of politicians when they reach office. Bishop Ayo Maria Atoyebi of Catholic Diocese of Ilorin lamented that the gains of democracy have persistently eluded Nigerians because politicians renege on their campaign promises after the election. Mr. Emeka Nworah said Nigerian politicians and political parties care less after securing the people's mandate. Moreover, it is very difficult to checkmate their excesses when they get to the political office. The essential facilities such as good roads, clean water, security of lives and properties have not been regularly provided by the politicians in Nigeria to the common people.

Mr. Haruna Ibrahim advised Nigerian to focus more on the candidate presented by the political parties and determine whether they could perform (or) not. Nigerians should not be deceived by the politicians with sweet coated mouth. While some are sincere and ready to follow up their promises with action if elected, others just engaged in idle and empty rhetoric.

Source: Dare Odufowokan, The Nation Newspaper, Lagos Nigeria, Thursday February 12, 2015. Pp 2 –3.

(b) Jonathan Goodluck and the Pledge to Quit

On Wednesday February 11, 2015 President Goodluck Jonathan affirmed his readiness to quit power if he loses the forth coming presidential election. According to Mr. President: "I will conduct free and fair election and if I lose I will gladly go home. I still maintain, this nation is more important than any one. The insinuation that I will not handover power are unnecessary and unfortunate" he said.

He predicted and said, I want to create the history to be the first African President to lose election, but let the whole world know that the elections are free and fair. "This nation is more important than anybody and I still maintain that if anybody wants to hold this office of the President or any office at all and feels that he is more important than the nation, that is not quite right

Source: Guardian Newspaper, February 16, 2015 p.1

Campaign Strategy Expenses and Voting Pattern.

Between November, 2014 and March 25, 2015, the two leading political parties established Directorate of Political Campaign office. The objective of the organ is to device ways and means to woo Nigerians to vote for their parties. The leading political parties People's Democratic party focus on Nigerian youth, Church Organizations and Traditional rulers,

Actors and Actress, while All Progressive Congress target the rural people, educational institutions, and elites in the society. To reach the wider audience, the two political parties embarked on aggressive mass media campaign just to scuttle each other chances of winning the people's vote. Apart from Radio, Television and Billboard messages and poster in every nook and corner of sub-urban, urban and cities, they also engaged the masses in town hall talks and public lectures. According to Advertisement practitioners of Nigeria, the two political parties PDP and APC spent about two Trillion Naira on advertisement messages published in the national dailies in Nigeria, including the electronic media.

Source: APCON Report, April 2, 2015, p.14

However, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these campaign messages influenced the voters choice of candidate. The 2015 general election showed that majority of states in the North and South West voted for General Muhammedu Buhari, while on the other hand President Goodluck Jonathan captured the South – South and South- East region. Region and Ethnicism also influenced the voting pattern, e.g.: Most Christians in South- South and South-East casted their votes for the incumbent President because of his ethnic affiliation to the region.

The All Progressives Congress focused more on political concept of Change which means Nigerians should embrace a new political ideology of welfarism as stated in the party's manifesto. A total departure from conservative ruling, waste of national resources and corruption that wrecked the country. After the election, result was announced by the Electoral Commission, the APC flag bearer General Muhammedu Buhari did not get much vote from the South-South and South East, because his political party was not strong in the region, expects in Imo state and some parts of Anambra and Abia State. The All Progressives Congress is in minority position in this area. However, the party APC captured most of the Northern states and South West region. Please see the next section of the paper on the performance of the two political parties. (See APC Document no 2, 2014, p.1-6)

Election Results and Political Parties Performance in 2015 General Election of Nigeria

The 2015 Presidential election has come and gone the winner and looser are known. For the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) that has been in power in the last sixteen years, the outcome of the Presidential poll was a disappointment and huge surprise. The Party for the first time since 1999, lost the Presidential seat to the opposition party All Progressives Congress in an unprecedented manner. Unprecedented in the sense that in some PDP controlled states of Bauchi, Benue, Kogi, Niger, Adamawa, Gombe, Kebbi, Kaduna, Kastina, and others, the party lost massively to the APC both in Presidential and National Assembly. The development has brought defections of PDP members to APC a head of the governorship and state house of assembly elections. The governorship election took place on Saturday April 11, 2015 as scheduled by the Independent National Electoral Commission. The election took place amid tight security by Soldiers, State Security Agents and the Nigerian Police. After casting of votes, the result was released, but the outcome was not palatable, because election thuggery, snatching of ballot boxes and tearing of ballot papers post-marked the election in some state, notably Imo, Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Abia and Rivers. The international monitoring teams, and locals observer condemned the act of hooliganism that characterized the gubernatorial elections in some of the local wards and polling stations in the above listed states. Therefore result in the affected areas were cancelled, the electoral commission later organized a re-run election on April 25 and 26, 2015 respectfully.

Presidential Election Result Between PDP and APC**Table 4.8.1 Presidential Election Result./Source: The Nation News paper March 29, 2015**

S/N	STATE	APC	PDP
1.	ABIA	13,394	368,303
2.	ADAMAWA	374,701	251,664
3.	A/IBOM	58,411	953,304
4.	ANAMBRA	17,926	660,762
5.	BAUCHI	931,598	86,085
6.	BAYESLSA	5,194	361,209
7.	BENUE	373,961	303,737
8.	BORNO	473,543	25,640
9.	C/RIVER	28,368	414,863
10.	DELTA	48,910	211,405
11.	EBONYI	19,518	323,658
12.	EDO	208,469	286,869
13.	EKITI	120,331	176,466
14.	ENUGU	14,157	553,003
15.	GOMBE	361,245	96,873
16.	IMO	133,253	559,185
17.	JIGAWA	885,988	142,904
18.	KADUNA	1,127,760	484,085
19.	KANO	1,903,999	215,779
20.	KASTINA	1,345,441	98,937
21.	KEBBI	567,833	100,972
22.	KOGI	264,851	149,987
23.	KWARA	302,146	132,602
24.	LAGOS	792,460	632,327
25.	NASARAWA	236,838	273,460
26.	NIGER	657,678	149,222
27.	OGUN	308,290	207,950
28.	ONDO	299,889	251,368
29.	OSUN	383,603	249,929

30.	OYO	528,620	303,376
31.	PLATEAU	429,140	549,615
32.	RIVERS	69,238	1,487,075
33.	SOKOTO	671,926	152,199
34.	TARABA	261,326	310,800
35.	YOBE	446,265	25,526
36.	ZAMFARA	612,202	144,833
37.	FCT	146,399	157,195
TOTAL		15,424,921	12,853,162
TOTAL NO. OF VOTE		28,288,083	

Table 4.8.2 Governorship election result

S/NO	POLITICAL PARTY	NO OF STATE	PERCENTAGE
1	APC	22	61.1%
2	PDP	13	36%
3	APGA	1	2.9%
TOTAL		36	100

Source: The Nation News Paper Publication April 27, 2015, P: 68

Table 4.8.3. House of Representative Tentative Election Result.

S/NO	POLITICAL PARTY	NO OF SEAT	PERCENTAGE
1	APC	314	66.8%
2	PDP	125	26.5%
3	APGA	11	2.3%
4	LABOUR PARTY	10	2.1%
5	ACCORD PARTY	10	2.1%
TOTAL		470	100

Source: INEC April, 2015

Table 4.8.4. Senate House General Election.

S/NO	POLITICAL PARTY	NO OF SEAT	PERCENTAGE
1	APC	64	58%
2	PDP	45	40.9%
3	LABOUR PARTY	1	0.9%
TOTAL		110	100

Source: INEC April, 2015

THE CONDUCT OF GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION'S AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS

Akwa Ibom: According to the former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Donald Etiebet in Akwa Ibom State the gubernatorial election was not free and fair; the election never took place in Akwa Ibom but the INEC announced results. The ex-minister accused of INEC officials of electoral fraud, he also challenged the electoral umpire on why the result of the House of Assembly elections have not been announced more than three days after the supposed conclusion of the polls.

The fact that three days after the elections result of the State House of Assembly elections have not been announced is an indication that election did not take place in the state.

He therefore, called for cancellation of the Governorship election, state House of Assembly in Akwa Ibom. Majority of the people challenged the Governor Godswill Akpabio to show the world the results of the various polling units. It was learnt that a group of INEC workers, under the aeg 6 x is of the correrneal staff of INEC in Akwa Ibom sent a petition to Professor Attahiru Jega asking for the cancelling of the state results. The workers alleged that electoral materials were escorted to the home of People's Democratic Party stalwarts instead of the polling units. The petitioners urged the INEC chairman to shift the April 11, 2015 election in Akwa Ibom to another date. They also accepted that the original copies of result sheet were handed over to a top government official in Akwa Ibom state. Therefore, the elections fell short of democratic standards.

Source: The Nation Newspaper, April 15, 2015. P.3.

Election Report from Kano State of Nigeria

The former Commissioner for rural and community Development in Kano under Ibrahim Shekarau, Mr. Musa Illiyasu Kwankwaso has been declared wanted by the Kano state Police Command for destruction of election materials at Kauran Mata ward of Madobi Local Government Council. The Police Commissioner said the Mr. Musa Illiyasu and sixteen others have been declared wanted for setting ablaze at 7:10pm 4015 ballot papers for governorship and House of Assembly elections of the local government. Thereby preventing election to take place smoothly at the centre.

Source: The Nation Newspaper, April 15, 2015, p.61

Report from Kogi State of Nigeria

The People's Democratic Party in Kogi State has called for the cancellation of election in five Federal Constituencies of the state. The party claimed that she won election in Dekina Local Government Council, where the INEC declared the result inconclusive". It therefore, demanded the cancellation of poll of Dekina II, Ajaokuta, Lokaja and Kason-Karfe. The PDP Chairman, Mr. Hassan Salawu accused the INEC officials for hob nobbling with the APC officials. The party chairman urged the INEC to conduct elections in the areas where the polls were declared inconclusive.

Source: Report From JamesAzania, Punch Newspaper, April 6, p. 31.

Abia: Agony of an Election

Crisis is brewing over the outcome of the governorship election in Abia State. Some of the candidates have been agitating for the cancellation of the result. The first to fire the salvo is the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr. Nyerere Anyim. He alleged that some political thugs sponsored by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were used to rig the election.

Anyim said the election went well in his Ward 4, Unit 023. The APC candidate did his accreditation in record time and this inspired him to express confidence in the exercise. He said that he would win, if what happened in his polling unit was replicated elsewhere in the state.

But, the reports he later got from other polling units dampened his spirit. He was informed of the massive rigging in areas dominated by the ruling PDP. He alleged that there were cases of missing result sheets and other sensitive materials and thugs suspected to be PDP agents were preventing people from voting in several polling units.

Former Deputy Governor and APC stalwart, Comrade Chris Akomas, said there were no problems at his polling unit at Obingwa, as the exercise was going on smoothly.

But, he noted that there are some areas within the state where reports reaching him showed that there are no result sheets for the collation of the election results.

The PDP governorship candidate, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, who voted in his Umuobiakwa ward 7 equally told our correspondent that the exercise was very smooth in his area and that there were no incidences.

Nevertheless, the PDP candidate said there were reports of pockets of violence at Isiala Ngwa. "The opposition are very much conscious of the fact that they are going to lose the election, so they resorted to violence to dissuade our people from voting," he said.

Ikpeazu expressed the confidence that he would win the election. He said that was the reason why he is so composed, unlike other candidates who were jittery. The PDP candidate stressed that security agents should do more investigation in areas where there are reports of violence.

Speaking after casting his ballot at his polling unit, Governor Theodore Orji expressed satisfaction with the turnout of voters for the governorship and House of Assembly elections, noting that it was a remarkable improvement from what obtained during the presidential and National Assembly polls.

The governor, who was accompanied by his wife, Mercy, said that there were reports that the card readers were not working in some areas. He assured however that the state INEC commissioner has indicated that something will be done in those areas.

There were pockets of violence in many polling units in Umuahia South Local Government Area. In fact, there was a report that the governorship and House of Assembly elections may not take place in about 50 out of the 121 units in the area.

The Nation observed that there was massive violence in the local government area which made INEC ad-hoc staff to run back to the council headquarters. At the gate of the council

headquarters, one of the election observers (names withheld) said that at Ipupe ward and Umuosu High School that the card reader failed to capture the identity of prospective voters.

The observer said she had suggested that manual accreditation be used. But, according to her, agents of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) refused, insisting that Prof. Attahiru Jega had stipulated that once the card reader fails, the next step should be to postpone the election till the next day.

“When the INEC officers resisted, arguing that voters came from far, violence erupted,” she added. She said following what amounted to an argument, APGA agents started beating up the PDP agents with dagger and machetes. “This compelled INEC staff to take to their heels, and take refuge at the council headquarters,” she said.

In his reaction, the Chairman, Umuahia South Local Government Area, Emenike Onuoha, said that the problem was caused by the failure of the card readers to capture the identity of voters.

Onuoha said that there was no provision for manual accreditation, in the event of the failure of card readers. “This made some party agents to go on rampage, forcing INEC staff to come here for safety.”

He said with the way things were going that about 50 units in the council area are likely to be disenfranchised and called on the security agents to ensure that election took place in those areas.

At Umuosu Nsulu, there were incidents of ballot box snatching. One of the party agents who does not want his name in print accused one of the supporters of the opposition party as the one responsible for ballot box snatching in the area.

At Ekeakara Road, where the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) depot is situated at Osisioma, reporters monitoring the election saw a man with several INEC ballot boxes filled with already thumb-printed ballot papers. A young man who refused to give his name said some thugs dumped the boxes along the road.

In Aba, at Abayi to be precise, some sons of a prominent traditional ruler in the area were observed moving from one polling unit to the other, asking people to vote for a particular political party or face their death. After some time, they took the boxes away to an unknown destination.

At the INEC head office in Umuahia, where the collation of the governorship election was holding, it was drama all the way. The two main parties, PDP and APGA, who were represented by their agents, Dr. Solomon Ogunji and Ahamdi Nweke respectively, were busy entertaining everyone with their theatrics. The tension was so high that the returning officer Prof. Benjamin Ozumba was forced to stop announcing the result mid way and asked all to go home and come back the next day.

The stopping of the announcement was as a result of an objection raised by Nweke who said that there was no election in Osisioma council area.

The returning officer then announced that by the powers conferred on him that he is hereby cancelling the election in three council areas, Obingwa, Osisioma and Isiala Ngwa North.

Prof. Ozumba said he was cancelling the results of those areas because of reports from international observers who said elections in those areas were marred by malpractices, violence, and ballot box snatching.

However there was a twist in the process as Governor Orji, accompanied by some chieftains of the PDP, stormed the collation centre. After conferring with the Resident Electoral Commissioner, the returning officer came out to say that he will revisit the already cancelled council areas and isolate the units where malpractices were said to have taken place.

From the eye witness accounts, it shows that the 2015 elections in some of the states of Federation Nigeria is not free and fair. The Independent National Electoral Commission has directed the aggrieved political parties to seek for ... at Electoral Tribunal set up by the Federal Government.

Source: Nation Newspaper, April 20, p.36-38.

Let us now proceed to section four to highlight the role of International Observer Teams in the conduct of the election of 2015.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULT AND FINDING

FIELD STUDY RESULTS AND FINDING ON THE CONDUCT OF NIGERIA 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS, MARCH – APRIL

Introduction Analysis of Question Opinion Polls

The questionnaire opinion polls were designed with the aim of gathering facts to be used in analyzing the preparedness of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the conduct of Nigeria 2015 general elections. Below is the report obtained from the poll study from the six geographical zone of Nigeria.

Guidelines: Please circle applicable options by indicating Agree (or) Disagree where appropriate.

South West Zone:

Questionnaire Survey: Public Opinion Polls

Question No 1: Are you aware that general election is taking place in Nigeria in March – April 2015?

Table 4.11 INEC Preparedness for 2015 General Election

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	5,400	90	600	10
2. South East	6,000	5,250	87.5	750	12.5
3. South South	6,000	5,100	85	900	15
4. North West	6,000	5,650	94.1	350	5.9
5. North Central	6,000	5,750	95.8	250	4.2
6. North East	6,000	4,900	82	1,100	18

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 2: Are you prepared to participate in the 2015 General Election of Nigeria?

Table 4.12 Citizen Participation in the 2015 General Election in Nigeria

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	5,820	97	180	3
2. South East	6,000	5,600	93.3	400	6.7
3. South South	6,000	5,500	91.6	500	8.4
4. North West	6,000	5,720	95.3	280	4.7
5. North East	6,000	5,100	85	900	15
6. North Central	6,000	5,300	88.3	700	11.7

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 3: Have you registered for vote for the political party of your choice?

Table 4.13 Citizen's Registration and Confirmation to vote for the Party of their Choice

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	5,860	97.6	140	3.4
2. South East	6,000	5,440	90.6	560	9.4
3. South South	6,000	5,220	87	180	13
4. North West	6,000	5,864	97.7	136	2.3
5. North East	6,000	4,990	83.1	1,100	16.8
6. North Central	6,000	5,700	95	300	5

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 4: Do you agree that the Independence National Electoral Commission has made effective arrangement for the conduct of the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria?

Table 4.14 Response on INEC Effective Arrangement on the Conduct of 2015 General Election in Nigeria

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	4,600	76.6	1,400	23.4
2. South East	6,000	4,210	70.1	1,790	29.8
3. South South	6,000	4,350	72.5	1,650	27.5
4. North West	6,000	4,200	70	1,800	30
5. North East	6,000	4,005	66.8	1,995	33.2
6. North Central	6,000	4,150	69.1	1,850	30.9

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 5: Do you agree that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) introduction of permanent voters' card will curb electoral fraud?

Table 4.15 INEC Introduction of Permanent Voters Card to Curb Election Fraud

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	5,800	96.6	200	3.4
2. South East	6,000	5,456	91	544	9
3. South South	6,000	5,330	88.3	670	11.2
4. North West	6,000	5,740	95.6	260	4.3
5. North East	6,000	5,680	94.7	320	5.3
6. North Central	6,000	5,640	94	360	6

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 6: Do you think that the Independent National Electoral Commission's introduction of card reader machine is appropriate?

Table 4.16 INEC Introduction of Card Readers Machine to Capture Voters Bio-data whether it is Appropriate

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	5,785	96.4	215	3.6
2. South East	6,000	5,230	88	770	12
3. South South	6,000	4,800	80	1200	20
4. North West	6,000	5,750	95.8	250	4.2
5. North East	6,000	5,660	94.3	340	5.7
6. North Central	6,000	5,550	92.5	450	7.5

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 7: Do you agree that election materials distributions to the six geographical zone should be done a week in advance?

Table 4.17 INEC Time Frame to Distribute Election Materials in one Week whether is in Order

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	4,800	80	1,200	20
2. South East	6,000	4,750	79.1	1,250	20.8
3. South South	6,000	4,900	81.6	1,100	18.3
4. North West	6,000	5,200	86.6	800	13.3
5. North East	6,000	4,850	80.8	1,150	19.1
6. North Central	6,000	4,750	79.1	1,250	20.8

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 8: Do you agree that INEC has enough manpower to conduct the 2015 General Election?

Table 4.18 INEC Adequate Manpower to Conduct 2015 General Election

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	1,200	20	4,800	80
2. South East	6,000	1,400	23.3	4,600	76.3
3. South South	6,000	1,580	26.3	4,420	73.6
4. North West	6,000	1,380	23	4,620	77
5. North East	6,000	1,560	26	4,440	74
6. North Central	6,000	1,150	19.1	4,850	80.8

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 9: Do you agree that INEC is adequately funded and provided with security measures to conduct the 2015 general election in Nigeria?

Table 4.19 On whether INEC is Adequately Funded and Provided with Security to Conduction the 2015 General Election in Nigeria

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	1,350	22.5	4,650	77.5
2. South East	6,000	1,250	20.8	4,750	79.1
3. South South	6,000	1,500	25	4,500	75
4. North West	6,000	1,280	21.3	4,720	78.6
5. North East	6,000	1,480	24.6	4,520	75.3
6. North Central	6,000	1,220	20.3	4,780	79.6

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Question No 10: Do you agree that INEC ad hoc staff are well trained to support the main stream staff for the conduct of the 2015 general elections

Table 4.20 On whether INEC ad hoc Staff is well trained to Conduct 2015 General elections in Nigeria

Zone	No of Question Circulated	No of Response Received (Agreed)	%	No of Response (Disagreed)	%
1. South West	6,000	1,400	23.3	4,560	76.7
2. South East	6,000	1,500	25	4,500	75
3. South South	6,000	1,350	22.5	4,650	77.5
4. North West	6,000	1,200	20	4,800	80
5. North East	6,000	1,600	26.6	4,400	73.3
6. North Central	6,000	1,475	24.5	4,525	75.4

Source: Field Survey May, 2015

Interview Survey Analysis on the Role, Conduct and Assistance of International Observers in the Nigeria's 2015 General Election March – April 2015

This section is on the relevance of International Monitoring Teams in the observations of Nigeria 2015 general elections. It is to determine their actions and also ascertain whether their inputs influenced the success and credibility of the election in Nigeria. It is a post election analysis of the international observer's role in Nigeria.

The interview is restricted to the political parties, academia, and officials of Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria at Abuja. Two hundred people only were interviewed, and their views collated and later analyzed. The response to the interview questions is based on Agree or Disagree, below is the result from respondent, code in percentage.

Question No 1: Do you participate in the 2015 general elections?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 164 (82%) (b) Disagree = 36 (18%)

Question No 2: Do you agree that Independent National Electoral Commission put in place necessary arrangement for the conduct of the just concluded 2015 general elections?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 66 (33%) (b) Disagree = 134 (67%)

Question No 3: Do you agree that there is need for international observers to cover the concluded 2015 general elections in Nigeria?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 192 (96%) (b) Disagree = 8 (4%)

Question No 4: Do you agree that the participation of international observers in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria made the elections free and fair?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 155 (78%) (b) Disagree = 44 (22%)

Question No 5: Do you agree that international observers are partners in progress for Nigeria's durable democracy and 2015 general election just completed?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 194 (97%) (b) Disagree = 6 (3%)

Question No 6: Do you agree that the Independent National Electoral Commission decision of inviting international observers to cover the 2015 general election in Nigeria is right?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 182 (91%) (b) Disagree = 18 (9%)

Question No 7: Do you agree that the international observers' role in monitoring the 2015 general elections in Nigeria is in tandem with the global standard and practice?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 200 (100%) (b) Disagree = 0 (Nil)

Question No 8: Do you agree that international observers (monitoring teams) has made Independent National Electoral Commission to improve on the conduct of 2015 general election just completed?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 175 (87.5%) (b) Disagree = 25 (12.5%)

Question No 9: Do you agree that international observers' participation in the Nigeria 2015 general elections made the election credible and the results acceptable?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 200 (100%) (b) Disagree = 0 (Nil)

Question No 10: Do you agree that international observers' assistance to the Independent National Electoral Commission has adequately contributed to the success of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria?

Response Analysis: (a) Agree = 180 (90%) (b) Disagree = 20 (10%)

Analysis of the Findings on the Conduct of 2015 General Elections in Nigeria

Below is the analysis of the findings on questionnaire opinion polls and interviews conducted on the Nigeria 2015 general elections.

The research findings revealed that the elections was conducted under civilian administration of former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. It was civilian administration handing over to another civilian government. About twenty political parties participated in the general elections. But only two political parties featured prominently during the campaign exercise, namely the People's Democratic Party and All Progressives Congress. Election guidelines were issued to the political parties and other relevant information on the conduct of the elections.

Public Opinion Polls Questionnaire Analysis

The field study report shows that majority of Nigerians were aware of the 2015 general elections and prepared toward it. About 68.8 million people collected permanent voter's card, however only 28.2 million people voted in the presidential election that took place on Saturday March 28, 2015.

There was a wide gap between the number of people that collected the voter's card and those who came to cast their votes. Majority of the respondents agreed that the Independent National Electoral Commission made necessary effective arrangement for the conduct of the 2015 general elections. It was also revealed that the introduction of Permanent Voters Card (PVCs) to a reasonable extent curbed electoral fraud. Large number of respondent also confirmed that the card reader machine to verify the bio-data of voters was germane. The field study revealed that the current policy of releasing voting materials to the state and local government is too short and should be extended to one week in the subsequent future elections. The opinion poll shows that Independent National Electoral Commission did not have enough manpower to carry out the 2015 general elections. Some of their official arrived late at the polling stations.

The reported collected revealed that the Independent National Electoral Commission was not adequately funded and funds were not released in time to start the preparation for 2015 general elections. Finally the ad hoc staff co-opted to compliment the electoral commission staff were not given adequate training on how to use card reader machine for the elections.

Interview Survey Analysis

Most people interviewed said they participated in the 2015 general election and that the Independent National Electoral Commission did not make adequate arrangement i.e. security

for the staff and election materials. This led to hijack of elections materials by the political thugs and harassment of the INEC official in some states of the federation. The report confirms the need for international observers that monitored the 2015 general elections. And that the participation of the international observation teams made the election credible, free and fair. Further, the role, actions and deed of international observers made them to become partner in progress in the political stability of Nigeria and the search for viable democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Therefore, the invitation extended to the monitoring team was a good idea in the right direction. The invitation extended to the international observers that covered 2015 general election in Nigeria was in line with the global community standard and practice. The presence of the international monitoring team also compelled the Independent National Electoral Commission to improve on their administrative and logistic arrangement on the conduct of the general election.

The presence of international observers for the 2015 general election in Nigeria was a morale boost to the Independent National Electoral Commission and made the election results acceptable at national and international level. On the whole, the majority of the people interviewed stated that international observers contributed significantly to the success of 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS ACTION, ROLE AND ASSISTANCE IN THE NIGERIA 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Nigeria Election has come and gone but the role of the International observers in ensuring democratic consolidation in Nigeria will linger in the memory of Nigeria people and the African Union in particular because of the premier position which Nigeria occupy in the African Continent. The observer teams also have become credible pillar for the management of global elections and ensuring that states conform with the universal best practices. The global electoral principles have become a useful guidelines for performance judgment. Furthermore, understanding the internationalization of elections is now of research interest in democratization and democratic transitions since 1999 and academic discourse.

ACTION: The International Observers came to Nigeria to assist the Federal Government in actualizing her political objectives and ascertain the degree of preparation for 2015 general elections, under the Independent National Electoral Commission. The extent to which the preparation has conformed to the international standard. The provision and supply of ballot papers, compilation of voters registers, the conduct of the polls, vote counting, announcement of the result and the election process. The international monitoring teams arrived in Nigeria in early February for registration and accreditation with the Independent National Electoral Commission. The observers also repositioned themselves when the Federal Government shifted the election from February 11, 2015 for security reasons. They monitor the election, collated their results and finally made some pronouncement on the conduct of the election. Below is the summary of the monitoring team observations.

ROLE: Federal Government Assistance: To ascertain the government financial assistance toward the conduct of the election is commendable.

Voter Readiness: They discovered that Nigerians are actually ready and willing to perform their civil responsibilities.

INEC PREPARATION: It was discovered that the electoral commission introduced of permanent voters card (PVCs) nationwide. This was a major problem for citizens and the political parties. The Electoral Commission did not have the wherewithal to print the voter cards. The electoral materials were produced outside the country, and there was late arrival of the items. The organization did not recruit enough staff for the administration of the voters.

Security for Voting Materials: The voting materials were given adequate security nationwide. The materials did not falls into wrong hand.

Card Reader: Some of the Card Reader introduced for bio-metric data verification of eligible voters could not function on the election date. There was delay and the commission had to revert to manual accreditation of voters. The card reader failed for some of the polling stations in the following states; Lagos, Rivers, Imo, Kaduna, Bayelsa, Kwara, Anambra and Ogun states.

Distribution of Election Materials: The monitoring teams found out that election materials arrive late in some polling station, thereby delaying the early registration and peaceful conduct of the elections.

General Assessment: International observers gave kudos to the Independent National Electoral Commission for a vast improvement in the preparation and conduct of 2015 General Election. This is in relation to preparation of revised voters list, security for the ballot papers, election materials and introduction of new devices, such as card reader machine and permanent voters card that minimized electoral fraud and manipulation of results. The international observers also commended them for registering 68.3 million people under political pressure and skepticism from the political parties. And for also putting in place data bases in each state and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and at the national level in Abuja. The data base captured names, photos and local government, address, date of birth and finger print of the prospective voters.

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS ROLE AND ASSISTANCE SUMMARY

CATEGORY	ORGANIZATION	ASSISTANCE
Inter-governmental	Joint donor basket fund supported by the EU, DFID, UNDP, South Korea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical advice ● Training ● Election observation ● Result tracking ● Voter education
	The Commonwealth Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Code of conduct for political parties ● Election observation
United States Government Supported	IFES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Media care ● Technical advice ● Election review ● Training manuals
	US Embassy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exchange of visits

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical advice
	IRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interactions and dialogues with political parties
Foundations	Ford Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical advice ● Media work ● Electoral institute/virtual library ● Voter education
	MacArthur Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical advice ● Voter education ● Civil society relations ● Research
	Open Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops ● Exchange visits ● Civil society relations ● Elections review
	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops ● Exchange of visits
International institutions	African Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political advice
	Commonwealth of state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political advice and election review

Source: INEC Document, (2015) p:15

THE IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This paper on the role of International Observers in the consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria: A case of 2015 general elections has revealed that some areas still require further studies in African politics and democracy consolidation by political science practitioners. The Nigeria 2015 General election revealed that in the developing nation's citizens still engage in the following practices:

- Low participation in the General Elections. Therefore leaving the politics to the money bags and corrupt politicians in the society. This undermines democratic consolidation.
- The research team also discovered the use of money and food stuff to induce voter in Osun and Ekiti state. (Stomach Infrastructure politics) still persist during the election period.
- Lack of regulation and control on political party campaign fund is also a problem.
- Unethical campaign advertisement and publications in the mass media.
- The use of election for nation building and national integration is also lacking in Nigeria and in the African politics. There is need for social and political scientist to beam searchlight in the above mentioned areas.

CONCLUSION

The 2015 general elections has come and gone, the memory will chalked up linger on in mind of political parties, local and international observers and particularly the Nigerian voter that made the election free and fair. This is not discounting the roles played by the Independent National Electoral Commission and International Monitoring Observers that came to observe the election and ascertain its conformity with international best practice and credibility. Their effort, action and roles are commendable. Their overseeing the election and the acceptance of the results without rancor and acrimony, has chalked up Nigeria's stature in the African Continent.

The International Observers role made Nigeria Government realize that the state cannot compromise with democracy while democracy and good governance are *sine quanon* for Nigeria's growth and development. To a reasonable extent, the Nigeria 2015 general elections did conform to tenets of democracy such as 'Transparency', free conduct of elections, freedom of movement during the election, counting of votes and announcement of result, and choice of contesting the election result at the Elections Tribunal. The International observers role shows that they are partner in progress and their action and assistances are commendable in the history of democracy and election management in the continent.

On the whole, Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) has done well, likewise, the national security operatives. Also, Nigerians that troop out to vote enmas and made change possible deserve commendation for the success of the 2015 General Elections. And, the international observers for a job well done for taking their time, energy and courage to travel around the country and ensure that the election was actually free and fair in line with tenets of democracy. The Electoral Commission should be praised for new ideas introduced into the electoral process, especially the Smart Card Reader and the replacement of Temporary Voters Card with the Permanent Voters Card. This also added value to the electoral processes. The culture should be sustained in the 2019 General Election. Above all, kudos go to the former President Goodluck Jonathan for conceding defeat and congratulating the president elect, General Muhammedu Buhari. Finally, election shape the destiny of a nation and determine the way changes and progress flow, under the watch of international observer, it deserves to be taken serious. Therefore, Nigeria as a member of international Community cannot ignore the comments, observations and report that emanates from international observers because they are umpire that gives verdict to the credence of democracy around the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper proffers some recommendation to stretching the practice of democracy and consolidation in Nigeria under three sub-heading namely: Political parties, State, INEC and International Observers role.

- (A) Political Parties Membership Enlightenment: The behaviour of political party's members still leaves much to be desired, hooliganism, thuggery and destruction of public property still happened in 2015 general election. Therefore, political parties need to educate voters and parties supporters on how to behave and conduct themselves during the political campaign.

- (B) State and federal government support: the state government need to work in tandem with local government areas to ensure that voters registration list is ready and submit the same to the state electoral office before the electoral commission deadline. This will minimize pressure on the INEC in preparing the master list for election.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should also ensure that budget prepared by the electoral commission is approved and fund released to the organization six months before the elections commence.
- (C) **INEC Action:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) need to take cognizance of the constraints encountered in the conduct of 2015 general election and put in place measures to forestall the mistakes of the future general elections.

Registration of Voters: This should be a continuous process as people become eligible for universal adult suffrage.

Collection of PVC's: More centres should be created in the states for easy collection of the permanent voters cards (PVCs). It should be every year and collection within two weeks.

Employment of Ad-hoc Staff for Election: There is need to employ more staff to cope with the General conduct of Election. The Electoral Commission should organize training for them at least six weeks before the election date. This would enhance their competence and performance during the election.

Readers Machine: The INEC office should ensure that it is tested before being dispatched to the polling stations.

Security of INEC Personnel and Election Materials: In the future elections, military Police should be engaged at the polling units and collation centres instead of Nigerian Police.

Collaboration with International Organization: To ensure credibility of national election in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) need to work with International Monitoring team and Implement their advices on genuine election in Nigeria.

Funding of Election: The national government should ensure that budget for the general election is approved and released in time for the electoral commission.

Electoral Reform Law: The national assembly needs to fortify the electoral commission by approving enabling bills that will make the organization truly independent and remove it from the control of the presidency. The Nigeria Electoral Law Reform Panel recommendations headed by Justice Muhammed Uwais should be looked into with a view put into use in the future election.

Advance Dialogue and Peace Pact: Democracy has now become a dominant theme in the international discourse while the role of the international observer is also a first to reckon with therefore the international monitoring team most encourage political gladiators to dialogue and sign a peace pact towards free and fair election.

The way forward: charting the way forward, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) need to take cognizance of the constructs encountered in the conduct of 2015 general election and put in place measures to forestall the mistakes of the future general elections.

Registration of Voters: This should be done one to two years ahead of the election.

Collection of PVCs: More centres should be created in the states for easy collection of the permanent voters cards (PVCs). It should be every year and collection within two weeks.

Voters Education: Sustainable, continuous civic and voters education in local languages in the rural areas is necessary and important.

Employment of Adhoc Staff for Election: There is need to employ more staff to cope with the General conduct of Election. The Electoral Commission should organize training for them at least six weeks before the election date. This would enhance their competence and performance during the election.

Card Reader Machine: The INEC office should ensure that it is tested okay before dispatch to the polling stations.

Security for INEC Personnel and Election Materials: In the future elections, military Police should be engaged at the polling units and collation centres instead of Nigeria Police.

Collaboration with International Organizations: To ensure credibility of national election in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) need to work with International Monitoring team and implement their genuine advices on election in Nigeria.

FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES

Party Politics, Elections and Democratic consolidation has become and International issues and concern of the global village. Nigeria 2015 general elections has revealed that some gap still need to be filled in the field of African politics and democratic consolidation. The areas that require astute attention of political scientists in future are:

- Parochial culture towards politics and new participation by the middle class in Nigeria.
- The Electoral reform Acts to strengthen the independence of National Electoral Commission in Nigeria, and conduct of fraud free elections.
- The use of National Election to promote National Integration in Nigeria, and the
- Money Politics and God fathomism sub version of Democracy in African states.

Future research studies will go a long way in finding durable solutions to political crisis associated with Election and democratic consolidation in African states and Nigeria in particular. It will ensure credible election and promote national development.

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APPENDIX A

PUBLIC OPINION POLL SURVEY

**TITLE: AN OVERVIEW OF INEC PREPARATION FOR THE
NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTION IN 2015**

Response is based on Agree and Disagree Factoral Analysis

Question No 1: Are you aware that General Election is taking place in Nigeria in March – April 2015?

Question No 2: Are you prepared to participate in the 2015 General Election of Nigeria?

Question No 3: Have you registered for vote for the political party of your choice?

Question No 4: Do you agree that the Independence National Electoral Commission has made effective arrangements for the conduct of the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria?

Question No 5: Do you agree that the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) introduction of permanents voters' card will curb electoral fraud?

Question No 6: Do you agree that the Independence National Election Commission's introduction of Card Reader Machine to capture voter's Biodata whether it is appropriate?

Question No 7: Do you agree that election materials distributions to the six geographical zone should be done a week in advance whether is in order?

Question No 8: Do you agree that INEC has enough manpower to conduct the 2015 General Election in Nigeria?

Question No 9: Do you agree that INEC is adequately funded and provided with security measures to conduct the 2015 general election in Nigeria?

Question No 10: Do you agree that INEC ad hoc staff is well trained to support the main stream staff for the conduct of the 2015 general elections

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW SURVEY

**Title: The Role, Conduct, Assistance of International Observers in the
2015 General Election March – April 2015**

Section A: What is your profession?

 How old are you?

 Indicate your gender sex?

Section B: 1. Do you participated in the Nigeria 2015 General Elections?

 a. (Agree) b. (Disagree)

 2. Do you agree that INEC has put in place necessary arrangement for the
 2015 general elections just concluded in Nigeria?

 a. (Agree) b. (Disagree)

 3. Do you agree that there is need for International Observers to cover the
 concluded 2015 general election in Nigeria?

 a. (Agree) b. (Disagree)

 4. Do you agree that the participation of International Observers in the
 2015 general elections in Nigeria made the elections free and fair?

 a. (Agree) b. (Disagree)

 5. Do you agree that International Observers are partner in progress in the
 Nigeria durable democracy and 2015 general elections just completed?

 a. (Agree) b. (Disagree)

6. Do you agree that INEC decision of inviting international observers to cover the 2015 general elections in Nigeria is right?
 - a. (Agree)
 - b. (Disagree)

7. Do you agree that International Observers role in monitoring the 2015 general election in Nigeria is in tandem with the global standard and practice?
 - a. (Agree)
 - b. (Disagree)

8. Do you agree that International Observers (monitoring team) has made the Independent National Electoral Commission to improve on the conduct of 2015 general election just completed?
 - a. (Agree)
 - b. (Disagree)

9. Do you agree that International Observers participation in the Nigeria 2015 general elections made the election credible and the result acceptable?
 - a. (Agree)
 - b. (Disagree)

10. Do you agree that International Observers assistances to the INEC has adequately contributed to the success of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria?
 - a. (Agree)
 - b. (Disagree)