

Foreign Assistance and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Anyalebechi, Shammah Mahakwe, PhD

Department of Political Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: Foreign democratic assistance is a strand of foreign policy adopted by governments and international organisations seeking to support the spread of democracy as a political system. While Nigeria has been one of the major recipients of this assistance, running into hundreds of billions of dollars and other non-monetary measures in 1999-2019, her democratic elections have failed to deliver increased stability and development. This raises the question as to what extent Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 is a reflection of the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to her. Highlighting the issue will allow policymakers and academics to accept that the flawed general elections since 1999 have continued to threaten Nigeria's fragile democratic experiment as a result of election irregularities rather than a lack of foreign democratic assistance. In achieving this, the study relied on content analysis, using personal observations and secondary sources. The realistic theory of change propounded by Anderson and a modification of Carol's (1972) change model theory were used as the framework of analysis. The data was analysed qualitatively. With tables and simple percentages, it shows that despite the quantum of democratic assistance to Nigeria between 1999 and 2019, her political development has remained gloomy. Although the level of assistance may not be high enough to improve the entire electoral process in Nigeria, it has made an impact in those specific areas that the assistance is directed at. It also shows that Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation is still not a reflection of the objective (s) of FDA because her electoral integrity is still threatened by many factors, such as the attitude of political leaders, electoral corruption, and so on. However, the study recommends that in order for FDA to be successful, the political elite's value orientation must change; the war on corruption must be pursued with vigour; government at all levels must be serious and pay more attention to the problem of poverty; and there must be greater harmonisation and alignment of national policies.

KEYWORD: Foreign Aids, Democratic Assistance, Consolidation.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's recurrent efforts at democracy have not been successful because of its inability to conduct free, fair and transparent elections and this has hindered its effective democratic development. After lengthened military regimes (1983-1999), about fifteen years of persistent dictatorship, characterized by repression and violation of the people's political, social and economic rights, the return of democracy was received with pomp and pageantry by civil societies, labour union, civil rights organization etc (Anyalebechi 2022, p.1). Hope was very high with citizens' expecting a sustained democratic practice and the dividend of democracy to be realized through the political participations and democratic elections in the country. But despite the

81	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 7 in Jul-2022 https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR
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conduct of eleven consecutive general elections with six in the Fourth republic (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019), the hope expressed by the people in the democratization process is gradually faltering while the expectations are becoming dashed. Political liberalization and not genuine democratic transition can best describe Nigeria’s political landscape since 1999 because of the failure of the process to manifest profound evidence of a growing democracy.

In some contexts, democratic elections have failed to deliver increased stability and development, and in some instances international assistance has even provoked a backlash against Western governments and organisations believed to be trying to control electoral outcomes. Also a range of evidence suggests that international support to democratic transitions often falls short of the desired standard and elections alone cannot resolve deeper political and social problems besetting states. For instance, most donor support to civil society, media and Legislatures has gone to help them conduct key activities such as reporting, monitoring, training and observation of democratic processes including elections, yet these institutions of democracy seem not strengthened. As a result, this sectors has remained largely under-resourced and without adequate institutional capacity to effectively engage other actors including the government on matters of public accountability, governance and development in general (Anyalebechi, 2022)

Thus, while there are compelling reasons for the international community to provide electoral support in partner countries, despite the complexity, sensitivity and challenges that these present, the ‘democratic optimism’ linked to the global triumph of democracy as a valuable goal of external assistance and as a political good that will improve the lives of citizens by bringing more freedom, political representation and governmental accountability, has given way to more sober appraisals about the health of democratic systems in the developing world (such as Nigeria). Initial expectations that countries experiencing democratic transitions would move in a linear fashion towards consolidated, institutionalized democracies have not been met. Instead, most of these countries now occupy a precarious middle ground between outright authoritarianism and full-fledged democracy, while a number of others have experienced (partial) reversals to authoritarianism. These ‘hybrid regimes’, combining authoritarian traits with some features of democracy, sit at the heart of more or less weak states and have become increasingly common, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Therefore, while significant progress has been made towards a more nuanced, harmonised and politically-informed approach to democratic transitions by the international community, a number of obstacles continue to impede more effective international support to democracies .These obstacles had triggered the debate about the current health of Nigerian democratic system and the need to look more closely at the actual objective of foreign democratic assistance considering the enormity of fund which she has received , including the non-monetary measures, and consequent general elections , as so many critical flaws still persists. For instance the institutions responsible for and managing elections, both at federal and local levels, are still perceived as lacking structural and operational autonomy, which is critical for the conduct of credible, transparent and peaceful elections. This is why it is so important to understand what kind of challenges the country faces and what needs to be done to make its democratic structures responsive to consolidation. The study therefore, seeks to determine the extent Nigeria’s democratic experience since 1999 is a reflection of the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to her.

Review of Empirical Studies

The debate on what constitutes an actual objective of foreign democratic assistance is ongoing. Adopting a principled approach to aid-giving requires the understanding of what motivates donors to provide foreign assistance in the first place. As has been emphasised in some part of this study , democracy assistance is only one aspect of a much broader donor agenda .Just as there is still a continuous and a seemingly unending

debate in the literature on the relationship between foreign assistance and development to developing countries, the foreign democratic assistance analysis in Nigeria presents no exception.

Although, very little research explores the causal mechanisms linking the assistance and the result obtained. Several authors have examined foreign democratic assistance in many nations. However, in the quantitative approaches to the study of foreign assistance objectives explanations for the level of aid provided can be divided into two groups. First, there are explanations that focus on the notion that some characteristic of the recipient state such as need, or the fact that the recipient is of some security interest to the donor, affects the level of aid provided by the donor state. Second, there are those explanations that focus on the notion that political, cultural, and economic characteristics of the donor state affect the amount of aid provided (Breuning and Ishiyama, 2003). Generally these long proposed motivations for aid-giving, reflect the differences between realist and idealist theories of international relations.

Fuller (2002, pp.78-90), in order to determine what motivates four donor countries, in a departure from Schraeder et al (2000) research, with a total of 370 cases, operationalized the yearly amount of foreign assistance given to the 37 African recipients by each of the donor countries between 1990 and 1999, which is shown in his Appendix A, and expressed as a percentage of the recipient country's GNP in US dollars. His research examined three hypotheses, which tested the realist, idealist, and neo-realist theories explained in the literature review. Other researchers acknowledge these theories as possible explanations for their findings and widely supported it empirically as theories that provide not only explanations for why governments choose certain recipient countries, but are also justifications that governments use to earn their citizens' support for their policy choices.

Thomas (1997), in one of his studies "In the name of Democracy: US Policy Towards Latin America in the Reagan's years" elucidated two basic reasons or objectives that characterized Western donor efforts toward democracy promotion. First, they are based primarily on the idea of promoting democracy for its own sake, as a political good that will improve the lives of citizens by bringing more freedom, political representation and governmental accountability. Second, foreign democracy-related assistance is primarily anchored on the notion that democracy is a valuable goal of external assistance because it will enhance inclusive political and economic institutions. In such a view, democracy according to Thomas (1997) is less an end in itself than one component of an overall strategy to achieving sustainable development.

Gulhati and Nallari (1988) assessing the inter-country allocation of foreign aid by selected donors to 18 recipients in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) replicated this finding as well. The *five* country cases discussed in this paper, show that the aid environment has not been supportive of recipients' reform efforts during the 1980s. A comparison is made between International Development Agency (IDA) allocation and other donors. Cross-section and time-series regressions demonstrate a variety of considerations influencing bilateral aid. Lastly, in discussing present aid policies and coordination efforts, *three* options are analyzed with respect to future aid policies. It is suggested that new initiatives by IDA in its allocation criteria and aid coordination efforts can yield some progress. Their analysis however, showed major donors to have distinctive aid profiles, although they added that donor objectives are not rigid but change over time.

Dessalegn and Meheret (2004), examines the impact and limitations of democratic assistance to post-conflict Ethiopia. The study which was based on information, observations and insights, and statistical material gathered from a wide range of sources elucidated that the number of bi- and multi-lateral donors providing assistance to the country has grown substantially looking back at least to the early 1940s. From their study, Ethiopia has received considerable international electoral assistance since 1991 and such assistance has strengthened the capacity of the National Electoral Board and civil society and human rights organizations in monitoring and supervising elections. Donor assistance has also been provided to political parties to make the electoral process more competitive. Financial support to civil society, especially local human rights and

advocacy organizations, has been instrumental in enabling the growth of the voluntary sector in the country. However, they also observed that the impact of such assistance in democratizing the election process has been limited because the ruling party has failed to broaden its political power base and provide a level playing field for all contestants. But without such support, civil society would have faced serious difficulties, and its achievements, especially in the areas of human rights monitoring, training and advocacy, would have been more limited.

Finkel, Pe´rez-Lin and Seligson (2007), examined the effect of US foreign policy assistance on democracy building from 1990 to 2003. The analysis distinguishes between direct and indirect casual mechanisms and employs a variety of statistical models that allows the authors to control for the unique democratization trend in each country when assessing causal effects , as well as for the potential endogeneity of US democracy assistance. The authors used a new data set that includes program information for 165 countries for the years 1990-2003. The analysis shows that democracy assistance does indeed have a significant impact.

Be that as it may, Adetula, Kew and Kwaja (2010) in a project report: Assessing Democracy Assistance in Nigeria elucidated that Nigerian views on the actual and potential benefits of democracy assistance vary, ranging from indifference to acceptance of it as a positive influence on democratic development. They had a survey showing that a substantial proportion of Nigerians (58 per cent) either feel that international donors (apart from the United Nations) and NGOs ‘do nothing/help a little bit’ or ‘don’t know’. Just under half of those interviewed (42 per cent) felt that international donors ‘help somewhat/help a lot’. When asked if international donors and NGOs have too little, too much, or about the right amount of influence over the government, only 14 per cent said that they have ‘somewhat/far too much’ influence, while 55 per cent either said they had ‘far too little’ or ‘about the right amount’. 31 per cent of those interviewed said they ‘don’t know’.

One of its findings is that the geopolitical and economic importance of the country, as well as donors’ initial high hopes regarding the prospects of democracy in Nigeria, prompted substantial funding for democracy promotion activities. Some results were achieved and also had an impact on other aspects of Nigeria’s development, including reforms such as privatisation, private-public partnership, NEEDS and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They further observed that the absence of the conditions for democracy discussed above, however, coupled with the limitations of the technical approaches and methodologies adopted by the donors and their partners in the country often worked against these achievements.

Furthermore, one of their conclusions is that unlike many developing countries, Nigeria is less dependent on donor funds. Even if all the donors were to halt their assistance, it would probably not provoke any significant impact.

Bariledum, Godpower and Tambari (2016) in their foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria (1999-2015): The nexus between strategy and election result, in an answer to the question, “apart from financial and technical assistance, what could major donors like US and EU realistically do to strengthen their stance on Nigeria’s democracy revealed that majority of the respondents indicated that at the programme level, major donors like US and EU should improve their funding mechanisms. . As reported by Anna (2007), donors’ funding is less than what a state governorship aspirant spent on campaign in Nigeria. This suggests that the funding strategy is not capable of improving Nigeria’s democratic expectations.

Sule, Wurobokki, and Sambo (2018) further examined the role of international donor agencies in supporting electoral process in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015. The paper used a 77 qualitative method of data analysis with primary and secondary sources to discover that international donor agencies did not impact much on financing of elections in Nigeria as the country is rich enough to finance her elections comfortably but, they contributed in the process through provisions of technical support to INEC staff, civil societies and weak

groups but it was not adequate to ensure a transparent election in the country. The research recommended for a holistic approach that will avoid suspicion locally and be a community-driven and indigenous in nature by the donors to ensure success at the local level.

While these authors and many others seem to stress that Nigeria is self-sufficient financially in funding the entire electoral process independently without relying on external donors' support unlike many other African countries, foreign donors have much less influence than elsewhere in Africa, even at the local level and by comparison foreign democracy assistance budgets were paltry to making any impact in Nigerian democracy, therefore Nigeria does not really need foreign democratic assistance. All these are often just postulated.

Different criteria are also proposed in extant literature to identify a consolidated democratic system (Schedler Andreas et al 1998) but two are discernible in this context. First, there is the 'two -election test or put differently the transfer of power test. This criterion reckons with the ' behavioral aspects of democratic Consolidation as it questions the attitude of political actors when defeated in an electoral contest. Clearly stated the probability of democratic survival is not high until and unless democratically elected regimes loose elections in subsequent contests and accept the verdict. Democracy is therefore consolidated when a ruling political party or class hands over power to an opposition party after losing the contest. This speaks volume of the readiness of major political players and their supporters to respect the rules that govern the game of electoral contest and their readiness to sacrifice their personal and/ or sectional interest for the good of the democratic system.

The second is the "simple longevity " or " generation test". The import of this criterion is that 20 years of regular competitive elections should be sufficient enough to adjudge a democracy consolidated irrespective of the fact that power is not transferred to another political party or class. The criterion argues that continuous and regular elections would have created in people a mind-set that develops apathy for any near alternative to democracy. It is therefore unthinkable for the electorates to explore another method of appointing their leaders. However, the foregoing discussions has evidently demonstrated that no one criterion or condition is a 'pure type ' on its own and that democratic sustainability is a product of a combination of factors or conditions operating together. An accumulation of these facilitating conditions therefore offers the prospects of democratic survival and deepening to be enhanced.

For Gunther et al (1995), democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regim, Consolidation,and enduring democracy. Democratic Consolidation, it should be emphasized, begins with the enthronement of democracy after a free and fair election, and spans through the period when its probability of breakdown is very low or on the other way round, when its probability of survival is very high. There must then be the optimism expressed by major political actors, all relevant observers and the entire citizenry that the democratic regime can last into a foreseeable future, thereby having the capacity to build dams against what Huntington (1991) would describe as a ' reverse wave'.

This means that it is important to examine the evidence because a greater understanding of the role of aid in the democratization process remains critically important. This study aims to push the boundaries on existing research through its current study by assessing the impact of foreign assistance on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth republic, investigating the challenges faced by these agencies in the discharge of their functions.

Indeed, a synthesis of related literature reviewed that the scholars acknowledged that 1)there are relatively comprehensive account of the crisis of Nigerian democratic governance and the factors that constitute the challenges. However, the point of departure from the perspectives of the scholars is that while some focused primarily on Nigeria,others extended coverage to other countries within the African continent from where they drew insightful lessons and far reaching policy recommendations and options for Nigeria 2) the past

twenty years, international donors have been increasingly active in promoting democracy, culminating in a vast and diverse collection of concepts, theories and empirical findings which has been on the increase. However, despite decades of research and practice, there is yet much confusion about the actual objective or substance of the democracy being promoted.

Therefore, aside from a few notable exceptions, much of this literature fails to determine the level of foreign democratic assistance rendered and its impact on the people of Nigeria in 1999 -2019. Another gap that does not feature prominently in the literature is the extent to which Nigeria’s democratic experience since 1999 reflects the objectives of foreign democratic assistance in the country. Thus, a critical gap on the literature is to examine the extent to which Nigeria’s democratic experience since 1999 reflect the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to the country. It is this noticeable omission or gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is essentially to assess the impact of foreign assistance on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth republic, investigating the challenges faced by these agencies in the discharge of their functions. In order to ensure a systematic and logical explanation of the subject-matter, a theoretical anchorage is needed to serve as a guide to this research study. In this respect, this study adopts as its framework of analysis the theory of change by Anderson, a modification of Carol (2008) change model theory. This theory is simply an elegant theory of how and why an initiative works. A theory of change is a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these relate to one another causally) for the goals to occur (International IDEA’s 2018–22 Strategy, Section 2 of Annex B).

Building on this, Anderson (2005) defines the theory of change approach to evaluation as a systematic study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of an initiative. Rogers (2008) writes, “A ‘theory of change ‘explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It can be developed for any level of intervention – an event, a project, a program, a policy, a strategy or an organization” (see UNICEF—Theory of Change). This suggests that a theory of change is a method for planning, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives in non-profit, philanthropic and government sectors. A theory of change articulates and graphically illustrates the assumptions that inform a change initiative, the prospective set of changes the initiative hopes to make, and the logical and chronological order in which causes and anticipated outcomes will occur. The theory of change ask that program planners, supporters, staff and, in some cases, participants outline the causal pathway between an initiative’s actions and its ultimate goals.

Typically, the theory of change includes an explanation of how and why anticipated changes will occur, rather than simply mapping the relationship among inputs, outputs and outcomes. Consequently, the theory of change is explanatory, while logic models are descriptive. Clark and Anderson (2004) argue that logic models “usually start with a program and illustrate its components” while “theory of change (work) best when starting with a goal, before deciding which programmatic approaches are needed “(For more information on the differences between the logic model and a theory of change, see Clark and Anderson’s “Theories of Change and Logic Models: Telling Them Apart”).

The basic assumptions of the theory of change include the supposition that the first step toward evaluating an initiative is to determine its intended outcomes, the activities it expects to implement to achieve those outcomes, and the contextual factors that may have an effect on the implementation of activities and their potential to bring about the desired outcome.

Applied within the context of this study, it is to be observed in the broadest sense; major Western donors stress governance in their relations with developing countries, including Nigeria. They believe that “progress in the protection of human rights, good governance and democratization are fundamental for poverty reduction and sustainable development” (Diamond, 1995). Thus, democratic assistance is directed at achieving an objective (credible election) to bring about the desired outcome (development through good governance and democracy).

The above scenario depicts the Nigerian context where activities of the foreign donor agencies show that from the 1999 democratization process to date, donors have assisted Nigeria with hundreds of billions of dollars and with other non-monetary measures. Yet, very little exists or is shown to prove even the causal mechanisms linking the assistance and the result obtained. For instance, given the multitude of competitive electoral cycles concluded, events in Nigeria from 1999 till date have demonstrated that elections can be intensely violent and in-transparent. This has been shown in several occurrences such as electoral violence, prevalence of moneybags, manipulations, godfatherism, clientelism and so on, all of which negate the value of conducting free and fair elections leading to distortion in their outcomes and further engendering public discontent about the quality and credibility of elections in Nigeria.

The situation is further exacerbated by: (a) the involvement of political parties’ that are devoid of ideology which invariably resort to electoral campaigns that revolve around ethno-religious cleavages and personality-based politics, coupled with lack of commitment to democracy and accountability both within their own structures and in the manner they engage with the electoral process; (b) institutions responsible for and managing elections both at federal and local levels that lack structural and operational autonomy which is critical for the conduct of credible, transparent and peaceful elections; (c) the judiciary in Nigeria which has been widely criticized for lack of independence and slow adjudication of electoral disputes, leading to cases being delayed for years after the end of elections; (d) the fact that though civil society and the media in Nigeria have played a pivotal role in advocating for democratic reforms over the years--and have done so successfully - these sector remain largely urban-based and somewhat elitist; (e) the patriarchal system which continues to weaken the role of women and other vulnerable groups in politics and elections.

The adoption of the theory of change in this study is informed by its aptness in providing a systematic explanation of the basic variables that this study interrogates. A theory of change approach to planning and evaluation is increasingly being considered an essential practice for many organisations, programmes and projects. The theory of change can be developed in many different ways but there are often common elements. These include an articulation of how change happens in a particular context, clarification of an organisation and its partners’ roles in contributing to change, and the definition and testing of critical assumptions. Development is a result-driven sector. Those involved in delivering development projects are accountable to a range of stakeholders, including the people directly affected – primary stakeholders or beneficiaries – as well as partners, donors and groups within their own organisations. A rigorous approach to a development problem involves critical analysis of all of the key steps that must take place in order to achieve the desired social change.

It should, however, be noted that the theory of change has been faulted by some scholars. According to them, the typical theory of change, as set out in many accounts, risks being misleading in two important ways. The first criticism is that they tend to be too linear, assuming that inputs lead to outputs and that outputs lead to outcomes. This sometimes happens. But anyone familiar with systems thinking will be doubtful of linear explanations, especially where complex social phenomena like homelessness, election, poverty or isolation and so on are concerned. The second criticism is that theories of change risk squeezing out space for learning. Several authors have mentioned that critical reflection, which is vital to double-loop learning, can be dampened by the over-prescription of new approaches, such as the use of theories of change (Allana, 2014).

Difficulties may arise due to the tension between being accountable to donors, on the one hand, (often seen as a priority in terms of the results-based agenda) and learning from our work.

Despite these inadequacies, the theory (responding to demands from member states and donors) is still considered very relevant for the purpose of analysis in this study. On the other hand, the theory of change approach to foreign democratic assistance rendered to Nigeria is useful as an attempt to evaluate donor initiatives so as to determine their intended outcomes, the activities expected to be implemented to achieve those outcomes, and the contextual factors that may have an effect on the implementation of activities along with their potential to bring about the desired outcome. This theory encourages deep observation of the system – how power is distributed; how decisions are made, what are the coalitions for and against any given change, how is change likely to happen in this system.

It helps in identifying and opening up the ‘black boxes’ in our thinking – intellectual leaps and assumptions, like the discussions on democratic donor agencies in their initial assumption that democratic assistance is directed at achieving an objective (credible election) to bring about the desired outcome (development through good governance and democracy). It will enable institutions, organizations or nations to more effectively target their interventions by guiding the work and enhancing the policy impact involved. Therefore, the theory helps to practically map the change process and its expected outcomes while facilitating project implementation, articulating expected processes and outcomes that can be reviewed over time and communicating the chosen change process to internal and external partners.

Above all, this theory of change approach will therefore enhance scientific understanding and stand as operational tools to further assess the activities of democratic donor agencies in Nigeria as this will facilitate the examination of the activities that reveal its impact towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic , it’s level and compliance from 1999 to 2019 with the objectives of foreign assistance for deepening Democracy practice in Nigeria and investigating the challenges faced by these agencies in the discharge of their functions.

DATA PRESENTATION

Foreign Democratic assistance and Democratic Consolidation: The Nexus

Anyway, achieving democratic consolidation calls for the enthronement of democracy as a system of organizing both the society and government and thereafter creating concomitant institutions, culture, ethics, support system, and political ‘will’, all of which are crucial in making it stable, efficient and responsive. This is, however, contrary to the cases in the ‘third wave’ democracies, especially those that evolved in the 1990s in Africa; including Nigeria where there has been growing disenchantment among the citizenry because of the worsening social conditions of the people after more than a decade of the advent of democracy due to the inability of democratic regimes to deliver democratic dividends to improve the living conditions of the masses , apart from threats of ethnic conflicts that face multi-ethnic states.

This, however, necessitated the need for foreign democratic assistance whose objective it is to promote and advance sustainable democracy worldwide; improve and consolidate democratic electoral processes worldwide; broaden the understanding of and promote the implementation and dissemination of the norms, rules and guidelines that apply to multi-party pluralism and democratic processes; strengthen and support national capacity to develop the full range of democratic instruments; provide a meeting place for exchanges between all those involved in electoral processes within the context of democratic institution-building; increase knowledge and enhance learning about the democratic electoral processes; and promote transparency and accountability and professionalism and efficiency in the electoral process in the context of democratic development (International IDEA, 1995).

For instance, some international agencies have strong conviction that there is a correlation between development potentials and challenges and the quality of democratic governance in developing countries. In this regard, providing democracy assistance will not only raise the legitimacy of a country’s elected leadership, but will also reduce poverty and conflicts which are among the main problems of development affecting most developing countries.

Democracy aid is specifically designed to promote greater political liberalization. While development aid encourages democracy through social and economic transformation, democracy aid focuses more on domestic agents to foster change. More importantly, democracy aid offers few “carrots” or “sticks” compared with development aid. Similarly, in his study on international co-operation for democracy and good governance, Santiso (2001) maintains that democracy’s credibility resides in its capacity to alleviate poverty and promote development. Put simply, a democratic government with credible political leadership formulates policies and programmes to address the problems of poverty and raise the quality of governance.

These perspectives as advanced by the U. S, U. K, and many European Union member states (EUMS) shows that they are advocates for democracy, committed promoting human rights, creating a safer and open world that guarantees democratic society, the quality of democracy, representative and participatory democracy as well as political pluralism as the cornerstone of development while stressing that conflicts and violence is a consequence of the lack of development and good governance.

However, this assertion has been supported by many scholars such as Rakner et al. (2008), Domingo and Nwankwo (2010), Santiso (2001), Newman and Rich (2004) and so on. According to Rakner, Fritz and Menocal (2008) donors support democracy efforts with the belief that democracy, as a system of governance, provides more benefits than authoritarianism, both internally and internationally. Due to its enormous benefits, financial and technical democratic assistance became part of development assistance strategy aimed at improving not only the capacity of democratic institutions but also alleviating poverty and other development challenges in developing democracies

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that establishment and strengthening of democracy is an on-going process that requires effort and commitment. Any democracy that cannot deliver on the basic needs of the people will be short lived (Ojwang, 1990). Equally, it is an acceptable fact that for democracy to survive, it must encourage healthy competition for all elective positions and mass participation of the people with enshrined rights, responsibility or duty.

➤ **A Summary Report of the Cost of General Elections in Nigeria.**

Table 1: Total Cost of the General Elections in Nigeria from 1999 till 2019

Review of official documents of INEC budgetary allocations

Years	Budget
1998-1999	N 1.5 bn
2002–2003	N 29 bn
2006-2007	N45.5 bn
2010-2011	N111 bn
2014-2015	N87.8 bn
2018-2019	N189bn
Total =	N463.5bn

Source: Official documents of INEC budgetary allocations (1998-2019)

- Three Major Areas of Democratic Assistance Rendered (election observation, financial and technical).

Table 2: A Summary of Selected Election Observation Reports in Nigeria, 1999–2019

Elections	Observers	Report
1999	TMG Carter Centre	‘The election saw marked increase in the number of electoral malpractices’. ‘There were areas where the incidence of electoral fraud was great enough to completely distort the election result.’ Reported concerns ‘about the serious evidence of serious flaws in the electoral process in certain parts of the country’. It noted cases of widespread irregularities, including ‘ballot box stuffing, inflated voter turnout, altered results, voter disenfranchisement, and inconsistent application of INEC’s procedures across the country’, as well as a ‘miraculous 100 percent turnout of voters in Rivers State during the presidential election’.
2003	TMG NDI EU EOM IRI	There were scores of cases of alleged electoral fraud across the country, often with the collusion of election officials and security personnel.’ ‘We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of the results in certain constituencies’, where it found ‘ballot stuffing, rigging, voter intimidation, violence and fraud’, particularly in the south and south-east of the country. ‘The presidential and gubernatorial (governorship) elections were marred by serious irregularities and fraud; in a certain number of states, minimum standards for democratic elections were not met. The observers witnessed election fraud in 13 states.’ Found ‘outright or attempted fraud’ in three states – Cross River, Imo and Rivers states, noted how ‘four polling stations closed before 1.00 p.m. with 100 per cent of the votes going to one political party’, and that there were ‘Many observed instances of premeditated electoral manipulations, underage, double and group voting, . . . [and] direct evidence of box stuffing and gross falsification of result forms’.
Cont. of a summary of selected election observation reports in Nigeria, 1999–2019		
2007	TMG EU EOM IRI ACE	‘... the April 14 and 21, 2007 general elections are NDI the worst elections that ever took place in the country’... ‘Our monitors throughout the country documented numerous lapses, irregularities and HRW electoral malpractices that characterized the elections in many states. We, therefore, reject it ICG and call for its cancellation. INEC has failed woefully in its responsibilities to conduct free and fair elections. We call on the international community not to recognize these discredited elections and not to confer legitimacy on any government that emerges there from’. ‘Though INEC scored itself 80 per cent, but I felt if I were to score her based on her performance, I will score her a failure grade. INEC did not just work.’ ‘The 2007 State and Federal elections fell far short of basic

		<p>international and regional standards for democratic elections.’</p> <p>Noted cases of ‘underage voting, errors on voter’s registration list, stuffed ballot boxes, lack of privacy for voting, falsified results and several other forms of irregularity’.</p> <p>‘Many seasoned observers stated that the 2007 polls were among the worst they had ever witnessed anywhere in the world.’</p> <p>Reported ‘intimidation of voters by thugs, alleged partisanship of some INEC and some security personnel, underage voting, hoarding of election materials, including ballots and result sheets by some INEC officials, snatching and theft of ballot boxes and papers, lack of voting in polling stations in many states, and the diversion of voting materials especially ballot papers and voting sheets to the private homes of powerful politicians from where ballot papers were thumb-printed or results tampered with’.</p> <p>‘The elections . . . were the most poorly organized and massively rigged in the country’s history . . . the campaigns and elections also witnessed violence, including over 20 people killed . . . Widespread electoral malpractices and the staggering scale of falsified results were possible because of serious shortcomings with the regulatory agencies most notably the . . . (INEC). Vigorously manipulated by the presidency, INEC virtually abdicated its responsibility as an impartial umpire. Inefficient and non-transparent in its operations, it became an accessory to active rigging. Similarly, the massively deployed police and other security services were expected to help curb violence but largely turned blind eyes to, and in some cases helped in, the brazen falsification of results.’</p>
2011	<p>NDI EU EOM Commonwealth JDPC</p>	<p>‘Nigeria’s 2011 general elections . . . were significantly more transparent and credible than the three preceding polls in 1999, 2003 and 2007.’</p> <p>‘The 2011 general elections marked an important step towards strengthening democratic elections in Nigeria, but challenges remain.’</p> <p>The ‘April 2011 elections marked a genuine celebration of democracy in Africa’s most populous country . . . Previously held notions that Nigeria can only hold flawed elections are now being discarded and this country can now shake off that stigma and redeem its image’.</p>
2015	<p>NDI NCSESR</p>	<p>‘The elections renewed people’s confidence in the EU EOM, electoral system as they knew their vote would Commonwealth count.’ ‘...the March 28 elections highlighted strong and enthusiastic commitment of Nigerians to democratic processes and the possibility of determining the leadership of the country through peaceful, transparent and credible elections. The delegation recognizes that Nigerian voters conducted themselves in a peaceful and orderly manner on election day and urges politicians across the spectrum to recognize and respect this public manifestation of citizens’ commitment to the democratic process . . . ’</p> <p>‘The 2015 elections were historic because the opposition won for the first</p>

		<p>time since the transition from military rule in 1999, and with the incumbent presidential candidate conceding defeat and thus paving the way for a peaceful handover of power. However these highly competitive elections were marred by incidents of violence, abuse of incumbency, and attempts at manipulation. Although the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made commendable attempts to strengthen electoral arrangements, systemic weaknesses leave the process vulnerable to abuse by political contenders. . . . now is the time for the new office holders, legislative bodies, INEC and other stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to electoral reform’.</p>
<p>2019</p>	<p>EUEOM TMG, EEOM , NDI, IRI Commonwealth, UNDP</p>	<p>‘Nigeria’s 2019 general elections were marked by operational and transparency shortcomings, electoral security problems, and low turnout. Positively, the elections were competitive, parties were overall able to campaign and civil society enhanced accountability’.</p> <p>However, the last-minute postponement of the elections YIAGA Africa, put an undue burden on voters, results’ collation procedures were not sufficiently robust, and inadequate information was provided to the public. ‘The governorship and State House of Assembly elections on March 9 were marred by overall low turnout and violence including against election officials and voters.’ Though, there were operational improvements in the elections, these were overshadowed by systemic failings, including a lack of transparency, systemic failures, inconsistent numbers, lack of clear checks and explanations, troubling electoral security environment and insufficient public information undermined confidence in the integrity of the process.</p> <p>Among these challenges were extraordinarily high rates of cancelled ballots, which disenfranchised nearly 3 million Nigerians. The number of these ballots was four times higher than in 2015, raising concerns that vote cancellations may have been part of deliberate efforts to manipulate election results.</p> <p>Overall, the elections were competitive with freedom to campaign. However, there was misuse of incumbency, including on state-owned state media, which prevented a level playing field. In the two weeks leading up to the state elections.’ some misuse of state offices, as well as institutional websites being used for campaigning by both APC and PDP incumbent governors.” State- level media broadcast political debates in 21 states, giving voters the opportunity to directly compare candidates. However, in 12 states, incumbents or their main challengers refused to participate.” All nine state- owned radio stations...served the interests of incumbent governors.....pressure on local media outlets and journalists before and on Election Day.</p>

Source: TMG, (1999, 2003, 2007); NDI (2003, 2012, 2015); EU EOM (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015); Omotola (2006, 2009, 2010); Adebayo and Omotola (2007); Obi (2008); Onapajo (BBC 2015a); Onapajo (2015b); EU EOM (2019)

Table 3: A summary report of the major financial areas of democratic assistance 1999-2019

Year	Amount in €/ \$	Exchange Rate then	Amount in ₦	Donor agency	Area of support
1999	Eur 7m	1EUR = N100	₦700m	EU	Human right and democracy promotion
	USD 5m	\$1=N21.89.90	₦109,450m	US	Support for the training of poll workers, domestic election observers, election supplies and logistics
	USD 2m		₦43,780m	US	
	USD 4.54 m.		₦99,350,600m	USAID, (NDI)	After the 1999 election, an additional USD 2 million was made available for the training of 10,300 elected officials in the fundamentals of representative democracy
	USD 3 m		₦65,670m	NDI	accountability, transparency constituent relations and coalition building
	USD 4.2 m.		₦91,938m	MCID	A four year National Assembly strengthening programme
	USD 4.2 m.		₦91,938m	USAID, (IFES)	
Total			₦1.202,363,06bn		Another NDI legislative strengthening programme with a budget of USD 6.2 million A four-year state legislative strengthening programme To provide technical assistance and support to INEC
2003	EUR 6.5 m.	1EUR = N61	N396,000m	EU (through UNDP)	Civic and voter education domestic and international observation and support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) information and results transmission centre.
	EUR 18.3m		N111,630,000m	EU	

	USD 2.75 m USD 188,000		₦34,925,000m ₦23,876,000m	USAID (IRI) AusAID (through IFES).	For 87 micro- and macro-projects in the areas of gender issues (including women in politics and gender in budget transparency and accountability); citizen participation and civil society capacity building budget transparency and the role of the media in budget monitoring and combating corruption; advocacy on the Freedom of Information Bill issues related to Sharia; and human rights promotion. Assistance to political parties and associations in specific technical areas. To support voter education efforts
Total			N1,885,926bn		
2007	EUR 40 m USD 24 m USD18.790 m	£1=N181.281377 \$1=N125	N725,125,508m N300,000,000m N234,875,000m	EU EU USAID	To support the Nigerian Electoral Cycle p2006–2011. This funding is for a two-phase elections programme consisting of a pre-election/election phase (August 2006–August 2007) and a post election/inter election phase (September 2007–2010). 1st phase JDBF project funding and providing technical assistance to the electoral process in Nigeria with UNDP, DFID, CIDA and INEC as contributing partners. On various forms of democratic assistance in

					Nigeria and in 2008,
Total			N12,600,00508br		
2011	EUR 40 m USD 1.7 m USD 4.6m USD 1.2 m USD25.27m \$25m \$10.9m \$3m \$12.6m \$230,000	£1=N208.78 \$1=N162.2999	N835,120,000m N275,909,830m N746,579,540m N194,759,880m N410,131,847m N405,749,750m N176,906,891m N486,899,700m N204,497,974m N37,328,977m	EU (JDBF) CIDA DFID UNDP US UNDP EU DFID CIDA UNDP KOICA	For post- and inter-election activities Through a preparatory assistance project and managed the Basket through a PMU. 4% out of this civil society 6.00m 24% agencies providing civil society DOS and USAID Political competition and consensus building 9.00m 36% Rule of law and human rights 3.00m 12% One of the major initiatives formed by development agencies is the Democratic Governance for Development Project (DGD) The first phase of the DGD project was implemented from 2010-2011 with specific objectives of empowering the capacity of political and civil institutions towards successful general elections in 2011. Following the successful implementation of the first phase, the second phase came into effect and was tagged DGDII. The overall objectives of the DGDII include strengthening the democratic character of Nigerian political processes and promoting outcomes that consolidate and advance

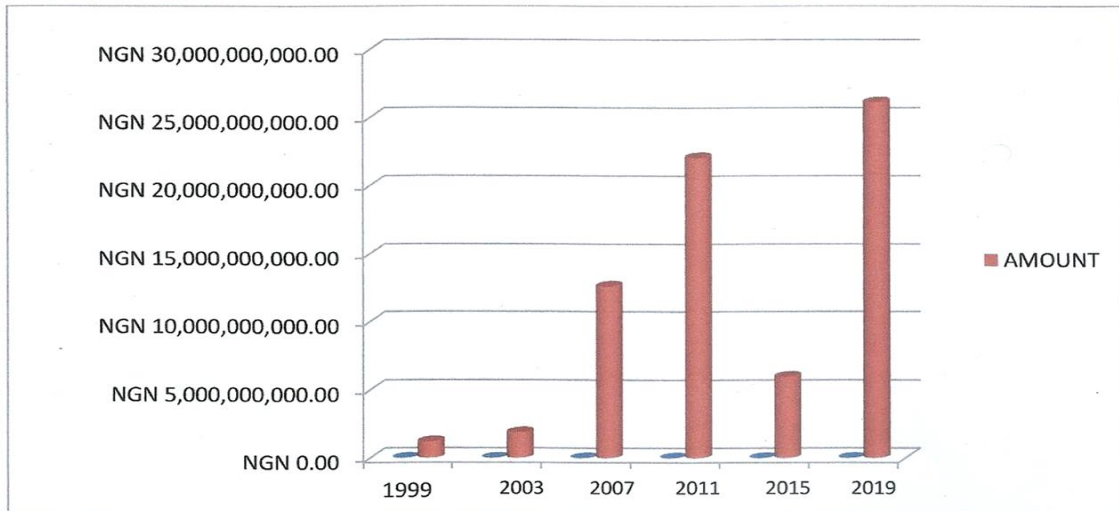
					democratic governance and accountability (DGDI Document, 2012). Donors' contribution to DGD II project from 2012-2015 and CSOs and their areas of coverage under DGDII Project from 2012-2015 (source: UNDP 2013)
Total			N22.065,541,55bn		
2015	USD30.00m	\$1=N199.2765	N 5.978,95m	US	Democracy, human rights and governance. Out of which Political competition 8.00m /27% civil society 10.00m/ 33% Good governance 12.00m /40%
Total			N 5.978,95bn		
2019	€26.5m	1EUR=N402.164	N106,573,460m	EU (EDF) (EU-SDGN)	For It provided funding to ten organisations that implemented various activities (trainings seminars, capacity development, awareness raising etc.)2016 – 2020 Project.
	€13m		N522,813,200m	ECES	In support of the Independent National Electoral Commission Nigeria's National Assembly
	€3m		N120,649,200m	PLAC and YIAGA	
	€2.7m		N108,584,280m	PPLPDC NIPSS	For political parties
	€2.6 m		N104,562,640m		
	€3m		N120,649,200m		Media
				BBC Media Action, CLEEN Foundation, WFD and the Albino Foundation	
	EUR. 13.684.210		N5,488,818.726bn	EU (ECES)	
					5 years. Support to the Independent National

	USD 15. 73m	\$1=N363.33	N571,518,090m	US	Electoral Commission (INEC). The other four other components, namely Support to the National Assembly; Support to Political Parties; Support to Media and Support to CSOs was implemented by Nigerian specialized organization Democracy, human right and governance. Out of which Rule of law and human right = 3.00m / 19% , civil society 2.00m / 13% , good governance 6.73m/ 43% political competition 4.00m/25%
Total			N26.150,600,919 bn		

SOURCE: EU (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019); US (1999, 2011, 2015, 2019); USAID-NDI, IFES (1999, 2007), USAID-IRI (2003); AUSAID-IFES (2003); CIDA (2011); DFID (2011); UNDP (2011); MCID (1999); KIOCA (2011); PLAC and YIAGA (2019); BBC MEDIA ACTION (2019).

TOTAL SUMMARY		
YEAR	AMOUNT IN FIGURE	AMOUNT IN WORDS
1999	N1,202,363,060bn	One billion, two hundred and two million, three hundred and sixty three thousand and sixty naira
2003	N1,885,926,000bn	One billion, eight hundred and eighty five million, nine hundred and twenty six thousand naira
2007	N12,600,005,080bn	Twelve billion, six hundred million, five thousand and eighty naira
2011	N22,065,541,550bn	Twenty two billion, sixty five million, five hundred and forty one thousand, five hundred and fifty naira
2015	N5,978,295,000bn	Five billion, nine hundred and seventy eight million, two hundred and ninety five thousand naira
2019	N26,150,600,919bn	Twenty six billion, one hundred and fifty million, six hundred thousand, nine hundred and nineteen naira.
Total	N69,882,731,609	Sixty nine billion, eight hundred and eighty two million, seven hundred and thirty one thousand, six hundred and nine naira.

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE MAJOR FINANCIAL AREAS OF DEMOCRATIC ASSISTANCE TO NIGERIA, 1999-2019



Graph indicating financial levels of foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria 1999-2019

A Summary of the multi- partner funding and respective donors of the DGD 11 between 2012-2015 is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: DGD II Donor Assistance, 2012-2015

Year	International Donor Agency	Amount Contributed
2012-2013	All Donors	\$12. 5 million (N4, 499, 965, 270. 50 billion)
2012-2015	EU	\$25 million (N8, 999, 925, 146.38 billion)
2012-2015	DFID	\$10.9 million (N3, 923, 966, 267.87 billion)
2012-2015	CIDA	\$3 million (N1, 079, 990, 375.97 billion)
2012-2015	UNDP	\$12.6 million (N4, 535, 960, 297. 47 billion)
2012-2015	KOICA	\$230, 000 thousand (N82, 799, 257.43 million)
Total:		\$64, 230, 000 (23, 122, 381, 345.67 billion).

Source: UNDP 2015

Table 5: A summary report of the major Technical areas of democratic assistance to Nigeria, 1999- 2019

Year	Donor agency	Area of support
1999	US USAID	Support for the training of poll workers, domestic election observers, election supplies and logistics for the 1999 elections. After the 1999 election, was made available for the training of 10,300 elected officials in the fundamentals of representative democracy, accountability, transparency, constituent relations and coalition building. Had also since 1998 allocated funds to IFES to provide technical assistance and support to INEC. The aim was for INEC to increase

	NDI	<p>its capacity to deliver more professional, efficient and reliable electoral services, especially in the areas of voter registration, voter education and the regulation of use of money by political parties.</p> <p>Implemented a four year National Assembly strengthening programme valued at USD 4.54 million (N1, 634, 383, 928.10 billion). The programme supported training in the areas of budget analysis, rules and procedure, role of committees, legislative drafting, constituency relations, civil society engagement and the development of a legislative resources and IT centre. Another NDI legislative strengthening programme with a budget of USD 6.2 million ((N22, 319, 396, 841.28) received USD 3 million in funding from the democracy and governance budget. Additionally, the Mississippi Consortium for International Development (MCID) was given USAID funding to provide technical support towards strengthening the capacity of state legislatures.</p>
2003	UNDP USAID (IRI)	<p>Provided funding for some members of CRESNET to work on youth and violence related activities and also for civic and peace education aimed at disengaging youths from political violence, and discouraging those who sponsor or could sponsor these youths to perpetuate violence. Other areas it focused include: executive and legislature strengthening for good governance; human rights and gender empowerment; conflict prevention; transparency, accountability and anti-corruption; decentralisation and local governance; public sector reforms and capacity building; E-governance (ICT for development); and public-private sector partnership.</p> <p>Assistance to political parties and associations in specific technical areas, which include constituency building, platform development and management of relationships with civil society, with the prospect of the latter becoming increasingly involved as watchdogs to promote accountability.</p>
2007	JDBF	Thus in July 2006, the EC Delegation took the lead in the establishment of the Joint Donor Basket Fund (JDBF) for the 2007 elections as a channel for funding and providing technical assistance to the electoral process in Nigeria, with UNDP, DFID, CIDA and INEC as contributing partners.
2011	U.S.U, DfID, CIDA, KOICA, UNDP	The project was introduced to provide technical and financial assistance to political institutions and civil society groups towards the promotion of credible election in Nigeria.
2015	USAID UKAID	support to the Commission's (INEC) implementation of a nationwide voter education campaign focused on voter registration and participation to ensure that all citizens – including those living with disabilities and other disenfranchised groups, know, understand, and can exercise their right to vote, Support for the

		Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project strengthens Nigerians' capacity to administer, observe, and report out on their own elections, support to a get-out-the-vote and non-violence campaign for 2015 endorsed by Nigerian non-partisan celebrities. The Project trained and deployed 2,500 domestic observers for the 2015 General Elections. These observers were trained in how to conduct a “quick count” otherwise known as Parallel Vote Tabulation, which is a systematic observation methodology that independently measures the quality of election-day processes and official voting results and so on.
2019	<p>EU National Assembly</p> <p>UNDP UNOWAS State Governments</p> <p>NHRC</p> <p>USAID YIAGA</p>	<p>EU Nigeria was added to the European Parliament’s Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) list of priority countries in 2017. Under this framework, a comprehensive programme of capacity-building activities has been developed and implemented with the National Assembly of Nigeria. These have included several joint seminars between Nigerian parliamentarians and EP Members, a fact finding mission to Abuja, as well as training for the staff of the Nigerian parliament.</p> <p>Promoting peace during the elections. This was done through engaging political players in consultations with state governments that culminated in the signing of Peace Accords in four states (Kaduna, Benue, Kano, Rivers).</p> <p>With support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP provided funding support to local CSOs that enabled them to undertake activities aimed at promoting women’s political participation and leadership. A number of activities were implemented in six states (viz, Adamawa, Anambra, Benue, Imo, Lagos, Rivers) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).</p> <p>UNDP supported the production and broadcasting of several contents on radio and television with the key message to promote citizen’s participation in the electoral processes. On election days, working together with the NHRC, UNDP deployed 900 election observers across the 36 States. The observers were critical in collecting and documenting any instances of human rights violations during voting days</p> <p>Through long-time partners such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI), USAID supported leading civil society NGOs, among them YIAGA Africa, which conducted a critical national Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) to avouch the legitimacy of the official election results for the public.</p> <p>Constitutional amendment that reduced the age requirement to run</p>

		for many public offices, inspiring hundreds of youth to stand as candidates at the national, state, and local levels. Likewise, the Inclusive Friends Association (IFA) gave thousands of persons with disabilities a chance to vote through the ‘Access Nigeria’ campaign, which led INEC to develop materials for visually and hearing-impaired voters. The internally displaced – another extremely vulnerable group –received voter education and mobilization programs in several states as well
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SOURCE: USIAD (1999, 2019); NDI (1999); UNDP (2003); IRI (2003); JDBF (2007); UKIAD (2015); EU (2011, 2019); NHRC (2019); YIAGA (2019).

DISCUSSION

The above was the major source of data in addition to the content analysis that was used in the literature and is used here also. Table 1 above indicates the total cost of the general elections in Nigeria from 1999 till 2019. A review of official documents of INEC budgetary allocations shows that the cost of elections has been rising since the country’s return to democracy in 1999. The total budgetary allocations INEC received from the federal government from 1999 to 2018 was N730.99bn, according to official documents. Of this sum, N463.5bn was captured under ‘electoral expenditure,’ N191.8bn was ‘personnel cost,’ N36.9bn was ‘overhead cost’ while N54.7bn was ‘capital expenditure projects.’ The electoral expenditure started with N1.5bn in 1999, rising to N29bn in 2002, N45.5bn in 2006 and N111bn in 2010. It came down to N87.8bn in 2014. The official documents further revealed that the electoral umpire’s highest total budgetary expenditure was during the 2019 elections where it spent a total of N189bn from 2018 to 2019 according to the INEC data. These figures do not include the cost to individuals and business in terms of preannounced shutdown of the country and sudden postponements. But most importantly, these figures did not include other money INEC got from international organisations working on election areas over the period.

The table 2 above shows involvement of international election observers in the various elections conducted in Nigeria from 1999 to 2019. In broad terms, international election observation is part of foreign democratic assistance (election assistance). Its main goals are the legitimization of an electoral process, where appropriate, and the enhancement of public confidence, as well as respect for human rights, and the capability for conflict resolution (EU 2000:4). Observer missions are supposed to make informed judgments on the conduct of such a process, on the basis of information collected by independent persons, who are not inherently authorized to intervene in the process. International election observation is based on the principles of full coverage, impartiality, transparency and professionalism (IDEA, 1997; EU 2002; 5-6). It is very clear and instructive that observer reports renews people’s confidence in the electoral system as they knew their vote would count (See selected observer report of various elections and its challenges highlighted above).

While table 3 (result) indicates the enormity of fund which Nigeria has received , including the years , the equivalent of dollar, euro or pound as at that year, donor agencies that gave the fund and respective areas this funds were given for. This however shows that Nigeria has been receiving foreign democratic assistance since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999 through different international agencies. These international organisations are mainly from the US and other developed countries such as UNDP and its umbrella organisations under it. In addition the above graph shows the level foreign (financial) democratic assistance contributed. This has been rising since the country’s return to democracy from 1999 to 2003.

In furtherance, table 4 indicates a total sum of all the monies injected in democratic and electoral support from 2012 to 2015 alone under United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This shows democratic support and electoral support involving funding of elections and provision of technical assistance by different

agencies that are involved and they have so far expended a significant amount of money towards that in Nigeria.

Data on the above table 5 show that international donors provided other technical assistance such as training to civil, political parties, production and broadcasting of several contents on radio and television with the key message to promote citizen’s participation in the electoral processes and so on, with the aim of making them to reach the grassroots for civic voter education as part of the improvement of the elections in general. However, this may not be without some problem.

However, with the categorisation of the sample size selected for the research conducted, further analysis will be made below. We shall use the following subheadings to indicate: Nigeria’s Democratic Institutions and Principal Areas of Support and General Elections in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and Foreign Democratic Assistance rendered. These subheadings of course do not lay claim to exhaustiveness but are rather more of highlights to explicate on the progressive tendencies in democratic consolidation in Nigeria. These are deducted from the available data for clarity purposes.

CONCLUSION

One of the darkest astrologies of Nigeria’s democratic journey was the widely circulated misinformation by some scholars that the level of foreign democratic assistance rendered to Nigeria is very low and has not made any impact on her democratic consolidation effort and that Nigeria is self-sufficient financially in terms of funding the entire electoral process independently without relying on external donors’ support compared to many other African countries (see Adetula, Kew and Kwaja, 2010 ; Bariledum, Godpower & Tambari , 2016; and Sule, Wurobokki and Sambo , 2018). The apologists of this assumption continued to refer to Nigeria’s oil wealth.

This study has shown the enormous scale of funds rendered to Nigeria towards promoting democracy from 1999 till 2019 (see table 2, 3, 4 and 5). This has shown that foreign assistance has made some important contributions towards the promotion and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria (particularly in the area of funding, training, provision of technical skills and information to INEC, civil societies and political parties and election monitoring). Therefore, even though democracy aid in Nigeria remains extremely small in comparison with total budgets for elections and total overseas development assistance to Africa (see figures), it plays a much more direct role with respect to vertical and horizontal accountability. By supporting independent media outlets, augmenting the capacities of civil society, reinforcing the electoral commissions, and strengthening legislatures and judiciaries, democracy aid aims to reinforce relationships of responsibility between citizens and their governments as well as between different government institutions. Without this aid, many of the key institutions and actors important for democratic consolidation would be much weaker.

This is evident of the progress of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. We have in this study identified democratic consolidation as a process and not a realization, analytically separated from the transition process. In this process, the nature of democratic consolidation in Nigeria has been characterized by the determination of the nation’s political actors to squarely face the challenge of the mutability of democracy (see theory of change model). We have in this study identified some of the features of the progress made in democratic consolidation in Nigeria; within the period of focus of the study (1999-2019). We have examined the nature of the attendant challenges that have made it difficult for donor agencies to achieve complete consolidated democracy and made some far-reaching recommendations on how to enhance the chances of democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Though Nigeria counts on the international community, democratic consolidation ultimately rests with Nigerians. Citizens whose lives and fortunes depend on democracy must accept and bear the responsibility for its survival. Democratic reform ultimately depends on citizens to make choices, frame options and initiate

changes. Only Nigerian citizens who live with the painful realities of failing democracy —can break the cycle of terror, poverty and mediocrity that keeps them subdued.

While agreeing that external actors and forces can, and indeed do influence internal political developments within a country, and therefore, can influence democratic transitions, we emphasize that their role can only but be limited and should not be overestimated. It is emphasized, for instance, that democracy cannot be imposed from outside: it springs and grows from conditions within a country. The argument is that no matter how sincere and determined a country or an international organization may be in its efforts to institute democratic rule in another country, its impact and influence "are largely conditional on opportunities presented by domestic developments," and, in most cases its efforts can only partially affect the outcomes of transitions." Where domestic conditions do not conduce to democracy, the efforts of an external actor could completely fail to make any impact.

We conclude this study on the note that besides the poor strategy of emphasizing NGOs with little influence on state institution, the stakeholders especially the political elite is another factor that hinder effective utilization of foreign democratic assistance. Hence domestic factors undermine aid’s impact. Despite these obstacles, Nigeria has enjoyed the good will of donors since its return to civilian rule in 1999. And it is unlikely that donors will discontinue their support for the promotion of democracy and good governance. Although, consolidating democracy is still some time very far away, particularly in terms of regime responsiveness to citizens and political empowerment of the public, the dismal general elections and the refusal of present and past administrations to reform INEC and other democratic institutions indicate that many of Nigeria’s rapacious political elite are still working largely against democratic consolidation. Yet the public desire for ‘dividends of democracy’ has remained very visible throughout the country.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were offered:

1. The war on corruption must be pursued with vigour. Put differently, it must be pushed beyond political propaganda, intimidation and witch-hunting of political opponents. Government must muster the political will to punish any corrupt public officer irrespective of his or her status in the society. In addition, legislation should be enacted by the National Assembly making capital punishment a penalty for corruption related offences.
2. Democracy does not thrive on an empty stomach and democracy cannot be consolidated when majority of the people live in abject poverty. Governments at all levels need to be serious or pay more attention to problem of poverty. The socio-cultural factor such as family system that appears to be reinforcing poverty has to be addressed. Governments at all levels must pursue vigorously programmes that can alleviate poverty. Such programmes must address the roots cause of poverty. Besides, our educational sector should be overhauled. The curriculum should be such that addresses the present reality.
3. Given the susceptibility of democracy assistance to abuse and political manipulation, clear definitions of goals and processes, as well as effective coordination of interventions, are crucial.

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