

THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN DEMOCRATIC ASSISTANCE IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ITS EFFECT FROM 1999-2023

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Abstract: Democratic governance is the acceptable form of government universally. Nigeria has been one of the major recipients of foreign democratic in recent times dating back to the democratic process, with hundreds of billions of dollars and other non-monetary measures from democratic promoters since 1999 till 2023 and Nigerian democratic elections failing to deliver increased stability and development, we ask to what extent is Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 a reflection of the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to the country, this paper will help policy makers and academicians to understand that the threatened fragile democratic experiment in Nigeria is due to the irregularities associated with the elections and not on the enormity of fund from foreign donors. This paper adopted the realistic theory of change by Anderson as its theoretical framework a modification of Carol (2008) change model theory, the paper employed personal oral interviews and secondary sources of data to analysis of data qualitatively, using tables and simple percentages we show that irrespective of democratic assistance from international partners to Nigeria between 1999-2023 her political development has remained gloomy. The findings show that Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidations 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 for FDA to be successful, there is need for change in the value oriented of the political elite, the war on corruption must be pursued with vigour, government at all levels need to be serious or pay more attention to problem of poverty and greater harmonization and alignment in democratization assistance is desirable.

Keywords: Impact, Foreign, Assistance and Democratization.

Introduction.

The Since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, she has had eleven general elections, with two of them in the First Republic, two in the Second Republic, one in the abort Third Republic and seven. The general elections conducted since 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023 respectively. Although, elections are very much a domestic affair, the inevitable growth of super territorial relations between peoples and nation states brought about by globalization has created multiplicity of linkages and interconnections. Therefore, elections have in recent years become an international concern with the advanced democratic states using the platform of international organizations to foster and promote democratic government in the aspect of elections.

However, following the democratic transitions of the later 1980 and the ebbing of the Cold War, democratic assistance became key elements of foreign policy and development assistance. It has been a particularly significant part of United States, European Union, and United Kingdom foreign policies. One reason has been the unfolding of "the third wave" of democratization in the world, the expansion of democracy that began in Europe in the mid-1970s, which spread to Latin

America and parts of Asia in the 1980s. This then accelerated dramatically from 1989 on with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the break-up of the Soviet Union, the unexpected surge of democratic openings in sub-Saharan Africa, and further democratization in Asia.

In addition to governments, multilateral organizations and a large number of national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) renewed and expanded their commitments to international engagement to support democracy. A consensus developed within the international community that considerations of national sovereignty should not shield a country's internal political arrangements from outside observation or criticism. Thus, not only did democracy emerge as a universal aspiration, but norms also emerged in the international community indicating that it was legitimate to have an interest in promoting and supporting democracy abroad (Burnell, 2000)

Nevertheless, since the rapid growth of democracy in the 1990s, international donor agencies in collaboration with civil societies have been pushing for electoral support globally, especially in emerging democracies (Abdullahi, 2015). Nigeria has been receiving foreign democratic assistance since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999, with hundreds of billions of dollars and with other non-monetary measures such as election observation, advising, organizing training programmes for civil society groups, conducting civic education campaigns and so on through different international agencies (Bariledum, Godpower and Tambari, 2016).

These international organizations are mainly from the US and other developed countries and its umbrella organizations. The organizations are often engaged in the act of either monitoring of elections or providing financial and technical support to the electoral body, civil societies and other specifically targeted groups in the country. Very little research has been carried out to explore its impact on the people of Nigeria, the experiences distilled from its activities and explaining clearly the impeding factors that have hindered foreign democratic assistance in Nigeria. This study therefore, primarily involves determining the objective of foreign democratic assistance in a bid to drawing out its impact and relationship with Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation. The aim is to proffer alternatives different from the existing ones for an improvement and to provide a missing gap in the existing works in this area of knowledge.

With regard to electoral governance, despite the several successful Nigerian general elections, some critical flaws still prevail:

First, the institutions (such as INEC and State electoral commissions) 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 For instance, funding of INEC through the Executive arm of government renders it vulnerable to manipulation and undue influence by the Executive to the detriment of the 'opposition' during elections (Justice Uwais' Report on Electoral Reforms, 2008).

Second, most political parties in Nigeria are devoid of ideology, and their campaigns revolve around ethno-religious cleavages and personality-based politics. This means that, political parties are not programmatically coherent, with no clear ideological distinction between them. Electoral choices are mostly made on the basis of personality, or ethnic or regional loyalties, or in the hope of acceding to the fruits of patronage. However, this is a historical trend that has deteriorated over the decades.

Third, as important as the function of the Legislature and judiciary in the realization of the democratic process of a nation, the legislature and the judiciary in Nigeria are relatively underdeveloped. While the judiciary has been widely criticized for allegations of corruption, for lack of independence and slow adjudication of electoral disputes leading to cases which are delayed for years after the end of elections; the Nigerian Legislature instead of enhancing democratic practice and promote good governance in the country dissipates so much energy on securing better condition of service for their members in cash and kind to the detriment of the people who elected them into office. Fourth and lastly, the civil society and the media sector in Nigeria remain largely urban-based and somewhat elitist and so on.

The situation is so grave that, in addition to these deficiencies, Nigerian elections have been marred with violence and manipulation, leading to distortion in their outcomes and further engendering public discontent about the quality and credibility of elections in Nigeria. Most of the reasons for this phenomenon have also been political parties' lack of commitment to democracy and accountability, both within their own structures and in the manner they engage with the electoral process.

Anyway, as part of effort to address these lingering problems of democratization, with regard to some credibility and capacity gaps that exist in relation to elections in Nigeria, in recent times, the donor community has chosen to continue to increase and deepen its support for democratic processes, moving beyond the more short-term logic of electoral observation and electoral support to incorporating more long-term substantive support across a range of institutions and actors. Some of the major institutions that were targeted are the state and non-state actors including the election management bodies (INEC and ISEC), legislators, political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) and so on. Indeed, Financial and technical support dominated and became the most popular and generally accepted form of foreign democratic assistance. Studies revealed that more than 90% of foreign democratic assistance are provided through financial and technical support to improve especially the quality of electoral process which is a tool of democratic transition (Adetula, Kew & Kwaja, 2010). This may not be unconnected with the fact that it is a more moderate and acceptable approach than the military option to resolving the challenges. More importantly, it is believed by some observers such as Rakner, Menocal and Fritz (2007, p. 34) and Abdullah! (2017, p. 92) that it is reciprocal as it has socio-economic and political benefits to both the donors and recipient countries.

Despite this belief and with a multitude of competitive electoral cycles, from 1999 democratization process to date, donors have assisted Nigeria with hundreds of billions of dollars and with other non-monetary measures, yet events in Nigeria have underlined that elections can be intensely violent. 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 organizations 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 sector 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. Here lies the rationale for this study. It is against this background, that this study therefore, primarily involves determining the objective of foreign democratic assistance in a bid to drawing out its impact and relationship with Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation and aims at proffering alternatives different from the existing ones for an improvement and to provide a missing gap in the existing works in this area of knowledge.

Against the preceding introduction, this study set out to broadly assess the impact of foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria from 1999 -2023. Specifically, the research objectives sought to: Ascertain the objectives of foreign democratic assistance, determine the level of foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria from 1999 to 2023 and examine the extent to which Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 reflect the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to the country.

The Concept Democracy

Democracy according to the Greeks means the rule of the people. Democracy is both a philosophy and a form of government, as a philosophy, it is an ideology of human society and a way of political life, as set of ideas and methods motivating and guiding the behavior of members of a

society towards one another not only in their political affairs, but also in their economic, social and cultural relationship as well (Rodee, and Christol, 1957:p. 83).

The term "Democracy" has been in use in the tradition of Western political thought since ancient times. It is derived from the Greek root "demos" which means "the people"; "cracy" stands for "rule" or "government". However, there are several advocates of democracy who have treated democracy chiefly as a form of government, Austin (1832), Bryce (1921), Merriam (1939), Appadorai (1968), Raphael (1976), Lowell (1884), and Seeley (1896) are some prominent supporters of this view. Bryce (1921), for instance, says that democracy is a government in which the will of majority of qualified citizen rules. While Merrim (1939) describes it as not a set of formula or blue print of organization but a cast of thought and a mode of action directed towards the commonwealth as interpreted and directed by the common will.

For Lowell, democracy is only an experiment in government. Seeley describes it as government in which everyone has a share. In his own view, Appadorai (1968, p. 137) conceive democracy in a simple way, system of government under which people exercise the governing power either directly or through representative, periodically elected by themselves. The contemporary democracy, according to Raphael (1976), rests on representative government.

Generally, as stated by Ayoade (1998, p. 11) democracy is a form of government in which citizens in a state have political investments of political participation and trust. It essentially has to do with the ability of the people to control decision-making. Zack-Williams, (2001, p. 213). This explains why Osaghae (1994) asserts that the central thing about democracy is to ensure that power actually belongs to the people. Democracy emphasizes freedom of the individuals in various aspects of political life, equality among citizens, and justice in the relations between the people and the government, and the participation of the people in choosing those in government Nnoli, (2003, p. 143).

Although, there is much debate over what constitutes democracy both in theory and in actuality. Despite the differences, majority of these scholars Dahl (1971), Nwokocha (2007), Schumpeter (1976) Huntington (1991), Egwu (2002), Igbuzor (2072), Okoli (1990), Ogunna (2003) Bryce (1921), Merriam (1939) all agreed that liberal democracy contains some basic principles which include participation, equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, freedom of speech and association, regular free and fair election, economic freedom, control of the abuse of power, bill of right, accepting the result of an election, human right, multiparty system and the rule of law. However, the foregoing is in line with the "common good and the will of the people" thesis of democracy. For, according to Schumpeter, (1976, pp. 250-238; 1976, pp. 153-188), democracy entails "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions, which realizes the common good by making the people decide issues through the election of individuals, who are to assemble in order to carry out its will". The second side of democracy, according to Schumpeter, 1950 emphasizes the centrality of competition to the emergence of political leadership. In this sense, democracy is an "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

What these general conceptions suggest is that democracy, as a system of government, stresses the sovereignty of the people Zack-Williams, (2001, pp. 213-214) (Osaghae, 1994). It is also suggestive of Robert Dahl's two dimensions of democracy" Dahl, (2000, pp. 35-40). The first dimension sees democracy as "an ideal, goal, aim, or standard, one that is perhaps unachievable but nonetheless highly relevant not only for classifying and judging political systems but also for fashioning strategies of democratization, designing appropriate political institutions, and so on". An ideal democracy is therefore conterminous with "a political system that might be designed for members of an association who were willing to treat one another, for political purposes, as political equals" Dahl, (2000, p. 37). Such a system requires certain criteria for effective functioning. These criteria include a set of fundamental human rights of citizens, democratic political institutions to boost citizens" participation in electing representatives, to freedom of expression, inquiry, discussion, and so on. One important thing is that these rights and opportunities must not just exist as merely abstract moral obligations, but must be "enforceable

and enforced by law and practice" Dahl, (1989, pp. 106-131; 1999, pp. 35-43, pp 83-99; 2000, pp. 37-38).

This takes us to the second dimension of democracy. It has to do with democracy in practice, as opposed to its theory. This becomes the more pertinent because, as Dahl (2000, p. 38) has also pointed out, "having rights and opportunities is not strictly equivalent to using them". The mere fact that a democratic society concedes certain rights, for example, to vote and be voted for, to their citizens, does not imply that all qualified citizens will participate in these activities. For example, empirical studies have shown that citizens do not put much value on actual participation in political life, as exemplified by the experience of the European Community as a whole. There, it was found out that "on the average over the entire period, 1973-92, 17 percent said they discussed politics frequently, and 34 percent said they never did so" Topf, (1995, p. 61; of Dahl, 2000, p.39). Nevertheless, the defining characters of a democracy include pluralism and multipartism, including free and competitive politics; popular participation in the political process; rule of law and respect for human rights, and constitutionalism or respect for the "rules of the game" (Osaghae, 1999; Oche, 2004).

Odofin, (2005, p. 94) argues that democratic theory is rooted in the ancient Greek polity, which classified government according to the number of participants in decision-making process. According to him, government is classified in a continuum ranging from rule by one person (monarchy), through rule by few (Oligarchy) and by many (democracy). The central focus is the locus of power and how power is exercised in the political system. He contended that the few individuals who control a nation's key financial, industrial and communication institutions constitute the ruling elites, a small group that government's modern society. He further argued that democracy is complex and means different things to different people. Abraham Lincoln conceptualizes it as the government of the people by the people and for the people. This powerful and historic definition suggests that democracy implies consensus government, freely chosen by the people for the pursuit of the ideals, aspirations, welfare, progress and interests of the people. Such government operates at the mercy of the people and held accountable to the people through periodic elections. It enables people to govern themselves through constant interactions and discussions of common issues, voting in elections and running for public office.

A democratic government is propelled or powered by the collective ideas, energy, wisdom, understanding, knowledge and perceptions of the people rather than the mystical construct swinging and wriggling in the mind of his Excellency.

In the context of the above, Dahl (as cited by Diamond, 2002) argued that democracy is: A system of government that meets three essential conditions: an extensive competition among individuals and groups (especially political parties) for all elective positions of government power at regular interval, and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies at least through regular and fair election so that no major (adult) social group is excluded and a level of civic and political liberties, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation (pp. 14-15).

Therefore, democracy requires institutional mechanisms, established procedures and organizations such as political parties, legislatures and interest groups through which public opinion is translated into government policy. The notion of government of the people, by the people and for the people is that through periodic elections, public officials could be held accountable for their activities and those whom are deemed not to have performed credibly are defeated at the polls. The threats of defeat at the polls are expected to motivate public officials Janda, (1989, p. 37).

The most important elements epitomizing the democratic agenda are popular participation, equitable representation and accountability. Thus democracy provides opportunities for citizens to have inputs in the policy process or contribute in the making of decisions that affect their lives and environments. It is also a means of creating political infrastructure through which diverse interests are represented in government and the institutionalization of mechanism to hold rulers accountable to the public will and providing the means for the removal of government from power without

rolling out the military tanks. And finally institutionalizing the principles of accountability through which rulers are held accountable for their action in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and co-operation of their elected representatives Schmitter and Karl cited in ROAPE, (1989, p. 44).

Therefore, democracy consists not only in winning elections but also and more importantly in establishing organic elections with the people and allowing them to control their leaders by holding them accountable. This may sound abstract especially in Nigeria where the political gladiators who canvassed and begged for votes from electorates abandoned them as soon as they assume office by claiming that their elevation or appointment is divine and not challengeable by any human institution. In such circumstances, elections become ritualistic and formalistic which changes nothing. The ritual of elections cannot guarantee democracy to people who face undemocratic courts, police and bureaucrats every day. Amuwo, (1992, p. 6). These tendencies have continued to erode the significance of elections in Nigerian democratic project.

Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy, which is also variously referred to as bourgeois democracy or elitist democracy, and so on is the dominant model, historically and contemporarily, in terms of the number of countries who are using it. It is a representative democracy in which the ability of the elected representatives to exercise decision-making power is subject to the rule of law, and usually moderated by a constitution that emphasizes the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals, and which places constraints on the leaders and on the extent to which the will of the majority can be exercised against the rights of minorities. However, liberal democracy is predicated on the following principles: individual freedom; equality before the law; universal suffrage (voting rights); election and representation. Additional features include: popular sovereignty; popular representation; majority government; guarantee of freedom (basic); consensus and accommodation; peaceful resolution of disputes; capitalism/free enterprise; and free market Zainawa, (2014, p. 23).

Although, in conceptualizing liberal democracy, three categories of definitions can be identified: First, is the formal (procedural): define democracy according to rules and meaning of politics (Minimalist). According to Mainwaring (1992), formal or procedural definitions of democracy are derived from Schumpeter's early formulation:

The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote (p50).

Although, most subsequent definitions modified Schumpeter's by, for example, adding universal suffrage which he neglected. Robert Dahl's (1971) conception of polyarchy illustrates this.

Second, is the Substantive or "Real": define democracy in terms of outcome of politics (Maximalist). Substantive democracy, according to Martin

Goes beyond the formal trappings of democratic political systems (such as multipartism and elections), to include such elements as accountability and genuine popular participation in the nation's political and economic decision-making processes. (p7):

In this conceptualization, a political system can be considered to be substantive democratic if it ensures socio-economic empowerment of the masses; if it is popularly-driven; in addition to having formal/procedural attributes.

Third, in between formal and substantive conceptions of democracy falls what has been dubbed as Middle-range: define democracy as a balance of rules and outcomes (Jega, 2007:p15). An example is Karl's definition of democracy as:

A set of institutions that permits the entire adult population to act as citizens by choosing their leading decision-makers in competitive, fair and regularly scheduled elections which are held in the context of the rule of law, guarantees for political freedom, and limited military prerogatives (p2).

The middle of the range definitions have several dimensions, such as: I. Contestation over policy

and political competition for office. 2. Participation of the citizenry through partisan, associational and other forms of collective action. 3. Accountability of rulers to the ruled through mechanisms of representations and the rule of law; and 4. Civilian control over the military.

Socialist Democracy

In contrast to liberal democracy, is socialist democracy which is a conception of democracy based on Marxist/Leninist principles and popularized by the attempts of socialist countries to present/represent their political systems as the credible alternatives to the western liberal democratic model. There were as many versions of socialist democracy as were socialist countries, ranging from the soviet, to Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban and Tanzanian varieties. Although, a critical element in the theoretical formulation of socialist democracy is mass, popular participation and notions of equity in the distribution of societal resources. It seeks to counter the elitist aspects of liberal democracy and the material base of involvement in representative democracy (Jega, 2007:p18). In effect, from the above explanations of democracy it is basically a system that offers freedom to

Meaning and Nature of Election

The International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences volume 15 conceives election as a method of aggregating preferences of a certain kind. This definition among others sees election as a choice making activity.

According to Kapur, (2009)

An election is a periodic event that is prepared in which an individual is elected or voted for a given office. (p.142)

For Almond & Verba (1963)

The periodic election is an accepted norm and standard of global practice and method of that determines who gets power or controls policy making. The election has been the normal practice in which modern representative democracy operates. (P.63)

Further more, Osumah (2010) elucidates that the basic objective of election is to select the official decision makers who are supposed to represent citizens-interest. Elections, according to him extend and enhance the amount of popular participation in the political system;

And to Ujoh (2004)

Election can be described as a procedure that allows members of an organization to choose representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. (p.1).

The above definition emphasizes the ideas of popular choice making and representation. Ideally, these constitute the essence of election in contemporary democracies. Since an election is the process by which the people select and control their representatives. It means that without election, there can be no representative government. This assertion is, to a large extent, correct as an election is, probably, the most reliable means through which both the government and representatives can be made responsible to the people who elect them.

But besides, aiding leadership succession, Alapiki (2004) posited that election as a concept embolden political accountability, participation and gives voice and power to the people. It also symbolizes the expression of the people's ultimate will and remain a stabilization machinery in any democratic process.

According to Gwinn and Norton, (1992), election is the formal process of selecting a person for public office or accepting a political position by voting. They added that an election is one of the means by which a society may organize itself and make specific formal decisions, adding that where voting is free, it acts simultaneously as a system for making certain decisions regarding the power relation in a society, and a method for seeking political obedience with a minimum of sacrifice of the individual's freedom. The essence of election is freedom of choice.

For Eya, (2003) election is seen as the selection of persons for offices by ballot and making choice

between alternatives. Eya refers to electoral process as the system adopted in the selection of persons for political offices. He further sees electoral frauds or malpractices as improper, illegal, deceitful or immoral behaviours and conducts which vitiate free and fair electoral process. This definition is instructive in the context of this discourse.

Dunmoye (2010, pp. 3-5) submits that elections have the following functions amongst others:

- i) Provides a means of selecting office holders.
- ii) Provides for popular control, ensuring that those who govern are within the constraints of the choices offered to the voters,
- iii) It ensures legitimacy by guaranteeing that citizens support will be given to the elected government.
- iv) Ensures political stability if conducted freely and fairly,
- v) It allows for alternation of political power and public offices; and lastly vi) It allows the electorate to know the programmes of the candidates through their political campaigns and manifestoes of their political parties.

Akzin distinguishes between technical and social significance of election. In a technical sense, he conceives election as "the process by which an office is assigned to a person by an act of volition needing the simultaneous expression of opinion by many people". In its social sense, Akzin defines election as "the process by which a person is linked to an office with due provision for the participation of the people meant to come under the officer's authority". Akzin, (1960, p. 706). The social aspect of election suggests the idea of ruling a society with the consent of the ruled. This tantamount to democracy and differentiate election from appointment.

The foregoing observations depict election as a process which involves interplay of activities. The existing literatures on the practice and science of election have identified the following as the components of the electoral process:

- a) Publication/announcement/declaration of transition programmes.
- b) Institutionalization of electoral bodies/organs.
- c) Appointment of electoral managers.
- d) Announcement of the electoral timetable.
- e) Registration of political parties.
- f) Registration of voters
- g) Voter education
- h) Voting/Balloting proper
- i) Electoral monitoring and observation
- j) Security and surveillance of the electoral process.
- k) Announcement/publication of the outcome (result) of the election.
- l) Adjudication of disputes arising from the conduct of the election (Ojo, 2004)

Election and democratic development

The significance of election in democracy cannot be over-emphasized. Studies have shown that there is a nexus between election and democratic development in a country. The existing literature on democratization in any society places emphasis on the significance of elections.

Elections in the words of Diamond, (2002:p353) "are the Litmus test of a democratic political system." This is such that to define liberal democracy in its essence is to underline the centrality of elections. Of the three conditions listed as defining the character of a liberal democratic system, two are categorically elections based. These are:

- a) Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups for positions of government power.
- b) A "highly inclusive" level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least three free and fair elections..., and
- c) Civil and political liberties sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation Diamond, (2002, p. 353). As is obvious from (a) and (b) above, election serves to focus political competition and to channel mass political participation in a liberal

democratic system. By those two basic purposes, election further serves two other important purposes of accountability and charge without which liberal democracy will lose its character as a responsible and responsive political system.

The democratic essence of elections lies in its place in revalidating political mandate which ideally stem from the people. It is against this backdrop that Robert Dahl in (Diamond, 2002:p41) refers to election as a polyarchy entailing the right of the people to choose at regular interval among competing leaders and policies.

History of Foreign democratic assistance

Foreign democratic assistance may be called and defined in many terms—democracy promotion, democracy support, democracy assistance, democracy aid, political development aid and so on, but it generally encompasses foreign policy activities intended to ensure the transition to or improvement of democracy in other countries (Burnell, 2005).

Although, the most basic definition of the term foreign aid or assistance is “resources given from one country to another”. But it’s usually understood to mean money, materials, and manpower given or loaned by governments, organizations and individuals in rich countries to help people in poor countries. So also referred to as international aid, or development aid, foreign democratic assistance is a category distinct from military aid. Aid flows through several major channels.

According to Rose (2011, p. 2) 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.

Closely related to the importance of democracy assistance in development and the language used to define democracy is the objectives behind supporting democracy. This rationale according to a comparative review of the democracy support policies of different European states by European partnership for democracy (EPD), 2019, reflects the thinking of developed or donor countries about democratic assistance in relation to sustainable development and foreign interests. It stated that most of their policies exhibit a mixture of instrumental and intrinsic arguments, with three distinct angles which includes; first, a clear human rights angle – ie justifying democracy assistance by the intrinsic value of democracy as a fundamental human right, second, is the instrumental value of democracy as a precondition for development. For these countries it is essential to act based on “democracy”, human rights and good governance principles”, and third is the angle of peace and security, which frames democracy support through the prism of conflict and national security i.e building democracy and civil society can strengthen peace and provide an effective mechanism for allocating political power and managing conflict (see Lawson and Epstein, 2019 p2, USAID’s strategic focus, June, 2013, U.S National Endowment for Democracy Act, P.L. 98-164 and European partnership for democracy (EPD) 2019 www.epd.eu)

Based on International IDEA’s vision, mandate and comparative advantage, and current threats to democracy, international IDEA’s mission is as follows:

International IDEA advances democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and an enabler of sustainable development, through support to the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institution and processes at all levels.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Internal IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with a mandate to advance democracy worldwide. The objectives of International IDEA as set out in its Status are:

- to promote and advance sustainable democracy worldwide;
- to improve and consolidate democratic electoral processes worldwide;
- to broaden the understanding and promote the implementation and dissemination of the norms, rules and guidelines that apply to multi-party pluralism and democratic processes;
- to strengthen and support national capacity to develop the full range of democratic instruments;
- to provide a meeting place for exchanges between all those involved in electoral processes

in the context of democratic institution-building;

- to increase knowledge and enhance learning about democratic electoral processes; and
- to promote transparency and accountability, professionalism and efficiency in the electoral process in the context of democratic development (1995; p2).

These perspectives as taken by the U.S., UK and many European Union member states (EUMS) to them shows that they are advocates for democracy, underlining that the promotion of human rights creates a safer and open world and guarantees democratic society, that the quality of democracy, representative and participatory democracy as well as political pluralism is the cornerstone of development and stress 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) democracy (promotion) assistance responds to a variety of foreign governments' and donors' motivations and interest, including foreign policy, security, humanitarian and development goals. Donors supported 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 institution but also alleviating poverty and other development challenges in developing democracies

However, the emergence of donor assistance to democracy should be considered in the context of a number of changes in the political landscape, beginning in the mid-1970s and continuing in the late 1980s and early 1990s, known as the 'third wave of democratisation' (Huntington, 1991). Carothers (2002) identifies components of this trend in seven different regions of the world:

- The fall of rightwing authoritarian regimes in Portugal and Spain in the mid- 1970s;
- The transition from military dictatorships to elected civilian governments in several Latin American countries from the late 1970s through the late 1980s;
- The decline of authoritarian rule in parts of East and Southeast Asia from the mid-1980s;
- The collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s;
- The break-up of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 15 post-Soviet republics in 1991;
- The decline of one-party regimes in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s;
- A weak but recognisable trend in some Middle Eastern countries in the 1990s (disputed by some authors, e.g. Stepan and Robertson, 2003, in Rakner, Fritz and Rocha Menocal, 2007)

Thus as democratization process spread through Latin America and parts of Asia in the 1980s and early 1990s and the ebbing of the Cold War, promotion of democracy constituted a formidable part of development assistance. The phenomenon became a key element of foreign policy and development assistance of developed democracies such as the U.S., Europe, UK, and others to transitional democracies.

Therefore, in spite of the trillions of dollars provided by foreign donors over the past 70 years, global economic inequality persists and countries remain underdeveloped, both economically and politically. Yet though the level of aid transfers varies from year to year, depending on budgetary crises and global need, foreign assistance is not going away, hence Fasanya and Onakoya (2012), posited that although, Nigeria has continued to benefit from all sorts of foreign assistance and in fact still collect at least as much as the amount collected in the early 1980s, yet her social-economic and political development has remained gloomy.

Democratic Consolidation.

Democratic consolidation is one concept that has attracted the attention of scholars and policy makers since the advent of the third wave of democratization. According to Aluaigba (2016, p. 138) democratic consolidation is construed as a stage in a country's democratic process where democracy acquires some characteristics of stability.

But, literally, the concept means an identifiable phase in the transition from authoritarian rule to civil rule and by extension, democratic systems that are germane and fundamental to the establishment and enthronelement of a stable, institutional and enduring democracy (Oni, 2014). Achieving democratic consolidation therefore calls for the enthronelement of democracy as a system of organizing both the society and government and thereafter creates concomitant institutions, culture, ethics, support system and the 'will' that are crucial in making it stable, efficient and responsive.

1. **Institutional Consolidation:** Unlike Linz and Stepan Merkel uses this term for the central constitutional and political institutions like the head of state, parliament, government, judiciary and electoral system. With their norms and guidelines these institutions influence the next levels.
2. **Representative Consolidation:** This intermediate level refers to the parties and interest organizations. This level and the first level are decisive for the third level of
3. **Behavioral Consolidation:** powerful actors like the military, enterpriser, radical movements try riot to get through their interests outside or against the democratically legitimized institutions and actors. When the first three levels are consolidated they have a decisive/positive impact on the last, the micro level, the
4. **Civic Culture or Political Culture, which is the basis of democracy:** The consolidation of this level can take generations.

Only if the four levels are consolidated, one can speak of a consolidated democracy which is resistant to crises Merkel; (1996, pp. 38-39; 1999: p. 45). The levels are temporally or sequentially and hierarchically organized. Merkel assumes that the first level is consolidated first (polity first), and the others follow then. Compared to many minimalist definitions which mostly focus on the first three levels he also focuses on the civic culture and puts special emphasis on the level of representative consolidation.

Theoretical Framework

In order to ensure systematic and logical explanation of the subject matter a theoretical anchorage is needed to serve as guide to this research study. In this respect, this study adopts as its framework of analysis the theory of change. This theory is simply an elegantly 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) defined a theory of change approach to evaluation as a systematic study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiative. Patricia Rogers 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). These suggest that a theory of change is a method for planning, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives in the 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. Theory of change asks that program planners, supporters, staff, and in some cases, participants, outline the causal pathway between an initiative's actions and its ultimate goals.

Typically, 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, theory of change is explanatory, while logic models are descriptive. Clark and Anderson argue that logic models "usually start with a program and illustrate its components" while "theory of change (work) best when starting with & goal, before deciding which

programmatic approaches are needed." (For more information on the differences between a 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: 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 desired outcome.

Applied within the context of this study, it is to be observed in the broadest sense; major western donors stressed 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 shows that from 1999 democratization process to date, donors have assisted Nigeria with hundred billions of dollars and with other non-monetary measures, yet, very little is shown to prove even the causal mechanisms linking the assistance and the result obtained. With a multitude of competitive electoral cycles, events in Nigeria from 1999 till date have underlined that elections can be intensely violent. This has been demonstrated in several occurrences, such as electoral violence, moneybags, manipulations, godfatherisms, clientelism and so on, all of which negate the value of conducting free and fair elections and 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) political parties' devoid of ideology, and their campaigns revolving around ethno-religious cleavages and personality-based politics and lack of commitment to democracy and accountability, both within their own structures and in the manner they engage with the electoral process (b) the institutions responsible for and managing elections, both at federal and local levels, still been perceived as lacking structural and operational autonomy, which is critical for the conduct of credible, transparent and peaceful elections (c) the judiciary in Nigeria has been widely criticized for lack of independence and slow adjudication of electoral disputes leading to cases which are delayed for years after the end of elections (d) though civil society and the media in Nigeria have played a pivotal role in advocating for democratic reform over the years—and have done so successfully - this sector remains largely urban-based and somewhat elitist (e) the patriarchal system which continue to weaken the role of women and other vulnerable groups in politics and elections. And so on.

The adoption of the theory of change in this study is informed by its aptness in providing a systematic explanation of the basic variables which this study interrogates. A Theory of Change approach to planning and evaluation is increasingly being considered an essential practice for many organizations, programmes and projects. 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 results-driven sector. Those involved in delivering development projects are accountable to a range of stakeholders, including 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 flawed 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 dubious 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; O'Keefe, Marquette, Roche, Hudson and Dasandi, 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 to foreign democratic assistance rendered to Nigeria is seen as an attempt to evaluate the donor initiatives as 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 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 on 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 its interventions by guiding its work and enhancing its policy impact. Therefore, the theory helps to practically map the change process and its expected outcomes and facilitates project implementation, articulate expected processes and outcomes that can be reviewed over time, communicate their chosen change process to internal and external partners.

Above all, the theory of change approach is adopted to evaluate the activities of democratic donor agencies in Nigeria as this will enable the examination of the activities to find out its objectives, its level from 1999 to 2023 and the extent to which Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 reflect the objectives of foreign democratic assistance to the country?

A summary report of the cost of general elections in Nigeria and the three major areas of democratic assistance rendered (technical, financial and election observations)

From the existing data above, since the inception of the fourth Republic, Nigeria has been receiving foreign democratic assistance. Donor agencies have been at the forefront of promoting democratic good governance and supporting electoral conduct with millions of dollars translated into billions in Nigerian currency. Scholars have observed (Adetula, Kew and Kwaja ,2010; Abdullahi, 2015; Bariledum, Godpower and Tambari, 2016., Sule, Wurobokki and Sambo, 2018 and so on) that the areas of assistance includes, technical, financial and election observations but the amount provided for these support of electoral conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies were not enough to influence the electoral process in Nigeria and foster democratic good governance because the country is self-sufficient financially in funding the entire electoral process independently without relying on external donors' support unlike many other African countries.

In addition, it has been observed above from some scholastic views (Rakner, Menocal and Fritz, 2007; Jega, 1993, Paris 2004, Cammack, McLeod and Menocal, 2006; Fasanya and Onakoya, 2012, Dreher and Kilby ,2010 and so on) that these donors have clearly defined goals and objectives with their philanthropic and international assistance" for democratic transition. While these assistance reflects the thinking of developed or donor countries about democratic assistance in relation to sustainable development and foreign policy interests, they are as well in the context of globalization promoting free market economy and favourable investment opportunities for their multinational corporations. Hence, despite the challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria, and donors' support for the Nigerian electoral system not achieving the desired objectives, donor agencies have found reasons to continue their interventions within the

period of study 1999 to 2025.

However, below are the total cost of the general elections in Nigeria from 1999 till 2019 and the views of the respondents on the extent to which Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation, is a reflection of the objective (s) of Foreign Democratic Assistance; it's key issues and challenges. Thus, data were obtained in the following categories and it was coded in the table below for easy perception.

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 1.5bn
2002-2003	N29bn
2006-2007	N45.5bn
2010-2011	Mill bn
2014-2015	N87.8bn
2018-2023	N189tm
Total =.	N463.5bn

Source: Official documents of INEC budgetary allocations (1998-2025)

These figures did not include other money INEC got from international organizations working on election areas over the period.

Table 2: A summary of selected election observation reports in Nigeria, 1999-2025

elections	observers	Report
1999 carter	TMG centre	'The election saw marked increase in the number of Carter Centre 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 EU EOM IRI	There were scores of cases of alleged electoral ND1 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

		<p>certain number of states, minimum standards for democratic elections were not met. The observers witnessed election fraud in 13 states.'</p> <p>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'.</p>
2007	<p>TMG</p> <p>EU EOM</p> <p>IRI</p> <p>ACE</p>	<p>'... 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 IIRW 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'.</p> <p>'Though IN EC 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/</p> <p>'The 2007 State and Federal elections fell far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections.' 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'. '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</p>
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2011	<p>NDI EU EOM commonwealth JDPC</p>	<p>violence but largely turned blind eyes to, and in some cases helped in, the brazen falsification of results.'</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</p>
2015	<p>NDI NCSESER</p>	<p>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> <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 . . . ' 'The 2015 elections were historic because the opposition won for the first 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</p>

		<p>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</p>
		<p>and other stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to electoral reform</p>
2019-2023	<p>EUEOM TMG EEOM NDI Commonwealth YIAGA Africa, UNDP</p>	<p>Nigeria’s 2019 general elections were marked by severe operational and transparency shortcomings, electoral security problems, and low turnout. Positively, the elections were competitive, parties were overall able IRI to campaign and civil society enhanced accountability</p> <p>However, the last-minute postponement of the elections put an undue burden on voters, results’ collusion procedures were not sufficiently, robust and inadequate information was provided to the public</p> <p>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 falling, 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 elections 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 governors .. pressure on local media outlets and</p>

		journalists before on election day.
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Source: TMG, (1999, 2003, 2007); ND1 (2003, 2012, 2015); EU EOM (2003, 2007, 201 I, 20)5); Omotola (2006, 2009, 2010); Adebayo and Omotola (2007); Obi (2008); Onapajo (BBC 2015a); Onapajo (2015b); EU EOM (2023)

Table 3: A summary report of the three major areas of democratic assistance (technical, financial and election observations).

Year	Amount in €/ \$	Exchange Rate Then	Amount in W	Donor agency	Area of support
1999	14.7m	1RUR-NIOO	WOOm	EU	Human right and democracy promotion
	USD 5m	.H-N21.89.90	N 109,450m	US	Support for the training of poll workers, domestic election observers, election supplies and logistics
	USD 2m		N43.780m	US	After the 1999 election, an additional USD 2 million was made available for the training of
	USD 4.54 m.		1499.3 50.600m	USAID, (NDI)	10,300 elected officials in the fundamentals of representative democracy, accountability, transparency, constituent relations and coalition building
	USD 3 m		1465,670m	NDf	A four year National Assembly strengthening
	USD 4.2 m.		N9 1,938m	MCID	

	USD 4. 2. in.		N91.938m	USAID, (IIES)	programme 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
Total			W.202,363,06bn		
2003	RUR6.5 m.	1KUR - N6I	N3 96. 000m	BU (through UNDP)	Civic and voter education, domestic and international observation and support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (1NKC) information and results transmission centre.
	IiUK 18.3m		Nil 1,630.000m	EU	For 87 micro- and macro- projects in the areas of gender issues (including women in polities and

		- ----- ---- r			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.
	USD 2.75 m		N34,925,000m	USAID(IRI)	
	USD 188.000		N23, 876,000m	AusAID (through IFP;S).~	Assistance to political parties and associations in specific technical areas. To support voter education efforts
Total			N1,885,926bn		
2007	RUR 40 m	£1 =N 18 1.28 1377	N725, 125, 508m	EU	To support the Nigerian Electoral Cycle p2006-201 1 . 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 2007-20 1 0). 1st phase JDBF project funding and providing technical assistance to the electoral process in Nigeria,
	USD 24 m	JJ 1 =N 1 25	N300,000,000m	ix i j	

	USD 18. 790 m		N234, 875,000m	USAID	with UNDP, DFID, CIDA and INEC as contributing partners. On various forms of democratic assistance in Nigeria and in 2008,
Total			N12,600,00508bn		
20 1 1	\I(!R 40 m	£1=N208.78	N835, 120,000m	ILU (JDBF).	For post- and inter-election activities
	USD 1. 7m	\$F=N 162. 2999	N275,9()9,83()m	CIDA	
	USD 4.6m		N746,579,540m	DF1D	Through a preparatory assistance project and managed the Basket through a PMU.
	USD 1.2 in		*4 194, 759,880m	UNDP	
	USD25.27m		14410,131,847m	US	4% out of this civil society 6.00m 24% agencies providing civil society DOS and USAfD 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 2010-201 1 with specific objectives of
	\$25 in		N405, 749,750m	I'U	
	\$10. 9m		N 176, 906, 89 1m	I) FID	
	1)3 m		N486.-899,700m	CIDA	empowering the capacity of

	Si 2. 6m S230.000		N204. 497. 974m N3 7,3 28,977m	UNDP KOTCA	political and civil institutions towards successful general elections in 201 1. 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 (DGDII 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 20 13)
Total			N22.065,541,55b n		
2015	USD30.0()m	.UI^N 199.2765	N 5.978,95m	us	Democracy, human rights and ' governance. Out of which Political competition 8.00m 727% civil society 10.00m/ 33% Good

					governance 1 2.00m /40%
Total			N 5.978,95bn		
2019-2023	626.5m	1F.UR=N402.164	N 106. 573,460m	EU (EOF) (EU-SDON)	For It provided funding to ten organisations that implemented various activities (trainings, seminars, capacity development, awareness raising etc.)2016 2020 Project.
	£13m		N522, 8 13.200m	r-;ci-;s	In support of the Independent National Illectoral Commission Nigeria's National Assembly
	63 m		N 120. 649.200m	PLAC and Y1AGA	For political parties
	€2. 7m		N 108. 584.280m	PPEPDC	Media
	£2.6 m		N 104, 562,640m	NIPSS	
	63 m		N 1 20,649.200m	BBC Media Action. CEEEN Foun dulion. WFD and	
	EUR. 13.684.210		N5,488,81X.726bn	the Albino Foundation	5 years. Support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The other four other components, namely: Support to the National Assembly; Support to Political Parties: Support to Media and Support to
	USD 15.73m	\$1=N363.33	N57 1,5 18. 090m	EU (ECES)	

					CSOs was implemented by-Nigerian specialized organization
				US	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 (2023).

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	N26.1 50,600,9 19bn	Twenty six billion, one hundred and fifty million, six hundred thousand, nine hundred and nineteen naira.
Total	N69.882.73 1,609	Sixty nine billion, eight hundred and eighty two million, seven hundred and thirty one thousand, six hundred and nine naira.

		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 die fundamentals of representative democracy, accountability, transparency, constituent
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		<p>relations and coalition building.</p> <p>Had also since 1998 allocated funds to IFES to provide technical assistance and support to INEC. The aim was for INEC to increase 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>
		<p>Provided funding for some members of CPvESNET 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>
		<p>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 Nigerm, with <u>UNDP, DF1D, C1.DA and INEC as contributing partners.</u></p> <p>The project was introduced to provide technical and financial assistance to political institutions and civil</p>

		<p>society groups towards the promotion of <u>credible election in Nigeria</u>.</p> <p>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 <u>Project trained and deployed 2,500 domestic observers for the 2015 General</u></p>
		<p>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 <u>election-day processes and official voting results and so on.</u></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, Adamavva, A'nambra, 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</p>

		<p>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 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 <u>programs in several states as well</u></p>
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SOURCE: USIAD (1999, 2023); NDI (1999); UNDP (2003); IRI (2003); JDBF (2007); UKIAD (2015); EU (2019,-2023); NHRC (2023); YIAGA (2023).

Data Analysis

Table 5: List of Selected respondents and their Category

Category	Respondent	Frequency
A	Foreign Donor Agencies in Nigeria	6
B	Members of Civil Societies	5
C.	Officials of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	6
D.	Political leaders / political parties	10
E.	Electorates (Academicians)-	5
F.	Focus Group Discussion	5
		5 Total: Six Categories

Source: Field Survey 2025.

The above indicates the categorization of the respondents selected for the interviews that were conducted. Additional information here was the criteria of their selection.

The category A of international donor agencies that were chosen emanated from the limited resources and the accessibility in Abuja Nigeria. Under listed are the five major agencies: (a) USAID (b) DF1D (c) EDF (d) UNDP and (e) CIDA

Category B, is known as Civil Society Situation

Room which comprises over 70 Civil Society Organizations in Nigeria that work closely with INEC in monitoring elections and other democratic activities. Five of them were selected with four based in Abuja and only one in Port Harcourt.

Category C is the INEC officials. Those selected includes: Director of international cooperation and protocol, Director of planning and monitoring, Director of finance and accounts, Director of Audit and Director of voter Education, Publicity, Gender and CSO.

In category D; the political leaders chosen were three senators from River state, and six political

party stewards of the Ruling party (APC) and major opposition party (PDP).

In category E; Electorate: academicians, a Professor of Political science from Ignatius Ajuru University, Port Harcourt who is a specialist in international relations, three PhD holders who are specialist in international relations and lastly, a Professor of political science at University of Nigeria, Nsukka who is also a specialist in International Relation and Political/Administrative Studies was selected for the interview.

Finally, category F is the Focus Group Discussion with some doctoral students selected from political science department (precisely international Relation) of Ignatius Ajuru university of Education, Port Harcourt which is a centre for political activities. All discussions centered on elections, democracy, good governance and democratic assistance or promotion.

The above was the major source of data in addition to content analysis that was used in the literature and is used here also. The information was presented according to their responses as follows. The respondents expressed their views on the objective (s) of foreign democratic assistance, successes/ challenges, its level so far in Nigeria and the relationship between its objective (s) and Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999.

In category A, the views they presented were summarized as follows:

	Success	Challenges/Issues	Objectives
	Improved elections, voters awareness	Transportation and communication, Fundamental lack of political accountability, transparency and fairness	Instrumental value of democracy for achieving development
	Improved civil society awareness and electoral conduct	Political violence, incumbency Factor, incidence of political thuggery, high volatility of Nigerian environment, <u>insecurity</u>	Human right and good governance
	Information dissemination and training	Political apathy of some electorate, manipulation of the political system in favour of certain individuals and political parties, Weak democratic institutions, and attitude of political leaders	Peace and security
	Understanding of parties and civil society trainina	Perception and political culture, economic mismanagement and corruption, practice of government and politics in Nigeria streaming from the perception on the part of the citizens of issues bordering on the concept of <u>purpose of democracy and politics</u>	
	Training of the Parliamentarians	Lack of vjorable opposition parties, poverty. electoral malpractice, leadership selection, attitude of political leaders in terms seeing political office as avenue for wealth accumulation	

Source: Field survey 2025

holders and provision of funding for civil societies and political parties. The major challenges include on the other hand transportation into remote areas, language barrier in communication

with the natives, economic mismanagement and corruption in the electoral system which impedes smooth election conduct, activities of politicians, political apathy and negative perception or suspicion of political role of the politicians in democratization. Other issues includes, manipulation of the political system in favour of certain individuals and political parties, fundamental lack of political accountability, transparency and fairness, poverty, incidence of thuggery, high volatility of Nigerian environment, insecurity, incumbency factor, lack of viable opposition parties and practice of government and politics in Nigeria stemming from the perception on the part of both the citizens and political leaders of issues bordering on the concept of purpose of democracy and politics. Also from the available data, indicate some objectives of foreign democracy assistance which include human right and good governance, peace and security and instrumental value of democracy for achieving development. The other category revealed the roles success, challenges from the foreign democratic assistance or donors in their own different ways as presented in the table below:

Table 7: Responses of Respondents in Category B (Civil Societies) on the Activities, level of assistance so far, objection of foreign democratic assistance and Nigerian democratic effort

S/IN o	Questions	A Ye s	B No	
1.	Have you received fund donations from foreign donors?	5	0	
~>	Did you receive training from foreign donors?	5	0	
3.	If yes (above), were the said training successful in boosting your activities?	4	1	
4.	Have you worked co-ordinately with [NEC in Elections Conduct?	5	0	
5.	Were you part of election observations in 2019 general election in Nigeria?	5	0	
6.	Were you able to reach grassroots and educate voters properly	3 •	2	
7.	Did your activities improve the electoral conduct in Nigeria?	4	1	
8.	Do the foreign donors have any other objectives outside philanthropy?	4	1.	
9.	Is Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation, a reflection of the objective(s)- of foreign donors? If not why?	o j	2	Attitude of the political class
10.	Have you met challenges in your daily operations?	5	0	
11.	Were you being able to influence voters on election conduct?	-> J	2	
12.	Have the foreign donors made any success?	4	2	
13.	Is the amount provided for technical support of electoral conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies good enough to improve the electoral process in Nigeria?	4	1	

As observed by many scholars (Adetula, Kew and Kwaja, 2010; Bariledum, Godpower & Tambari, 2016), the international donors provided fund and other technical assistance such as training to civil societies with the aim of making them to reach the grassroots for civic voter education as part of the improvement of the election in general. However, the problem here is they have admitted in

the table above that they were not able to reach the grassroots appropriately as most of their activities centred in urban areas. This is where the operations failed to impact as required.

Table 8: Responses of Respondents in Category C (Senior INEC Officials) on the Activities, level of assistance so far, objectives of foreign democratic assistance and Nigerian democratic effort.

S/N	Questions	A Yes	B No	Objectives	
1.	Is there any need for foreign democracy assistance in Nigeria?	4	2		
2.	Does the electoral body need any funding externally?	3	2		
3	Do the electoral officials need training from donors?	6	0		
4.	Has the foreign donors improved the electoral conduct?	2	4		
5.	Are the voters affected by foreign donors positively?	1	5		
6.	Is the training given to the legislature leading to good governance?	1	5		
7.	Do the foreign donors target politicians for better governance?	4	2		
8.	Do the foreign donors have any other objective(s) outside philanthropy?	5	1		
9.	If yes (above), identify some of the possible objectives			Increase economic liberalization, increase trade and investment, promoting free market economy and favourable investment opportunities for their multinational co-operations	
10.	Have the foreign donors achieve their goals so far?	1	5		
11.	Have the foreign donors achieved some significant success?	•*» J	i j		
12.	Is Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation a reflection of the objective(.s) of foreign donors	1	5		
13.	Have the foreign donors met serious challenges	6	0		
14.	If yes, (above) what are the challenges?				Electoral malpractice, corruption

15.	Is the amount provided for technical support of electoral conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies good enough to improve the electoral process in Nigeria?	4	0		
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Source: Field survey 2025

The above table is a response of the six (6) INEC staff (category C) that were interviewed and majority of their views indicated clearly that the foreign democratic donors played a significant role in the electoral support but to a lesser extent and they are yet to achieve their objectives as most of the respondents responded in negative and indicated some of the challenges in the Nigeria democratic experience. The next group also revealed the same position as expressed below.

Table 9: Responses of Respondents in Category D (Political Leaders/Political Parties) on the Activities, lessons, level of assistance so far, objectives of foreign democratic assistance and Nigerian democratic effort

S/N	Questions	A Yes	B No	Objectives	Challenges
1.	Is there any need for foreign democracy assistance in Nigeria?	6	4		
0	Do political parties need any funding externally?	7			
~i j.	Do political parties need training from donors?	7			
4.	Has the foreign donors improved the electoral conduct?	4	6		
5.	Are the voters affected by foreign donors positively?	5	5'		
6.	Is the training given to the legislature leading to good governance?	4	6		
7.	Do the foreign donors target politicians for better governance?	6	4		
8.	Do the foreign donors have any other objective(s) outside philanthropy?	8	2		
9.	If yes (above), identify some of the possible objectives			Increase economic liberalization, increase trade and investment, promoting free market economy and	
				favourable investment opportunities for their multinational cooperations	

10.	Do the foreign donors achieve their goals so far?	0	7		
11.	Have the foreign donors achieved some significant success?	5	5		
12.	Is Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation a reflection of the objective(s) of foreign donors	2	8		
13.	Have the foreign donors met serious challenges	9	1		
14.	If yes, (above) what are the challenges?				Poverty, incumbency factor
15.	Is the amount provided for technical support of electoral conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies good enough to improve the electoral process in Nigeria?	6	4		"

Source: Field survey 2025

The above table is a response of the ten (10) political leaders (category D) that were interviewed and majority of their views indicated clearly that the foreign democratic donors played a significant role in the electoral support but to a lesser extent and they are yet to achieve their objectives as most of the respondents responded in negative and indicated some of the challenges in the Nigeria democratic experience.

Table 10: Responses of Respondents in Category E (Academicians) on the Activities, level of assistance so far, objectives of foreign democratic assistance and Nigerian democratic effort

S/N	Questions	A Yes	B No	Objectives	Challenges
1.	Does Nigeria need foreign democratic assistant?	^ j	2		
o	Where the electoral officer trained by donors?	4	1		
3.	Have the foreign donors improved the electoral conduct?	3	2		
4.	Are the voters aware of foreign donations and donors?	1	4		
5.	Is the training given to the legislature leading to good governance?	1	4		
, 6.	Do (he foreign donors target politicians for better governance?	3	2		
7.	Do the foreign donors have any oilier objjee-live(s) outside philanthropy?	1	4		

8.	If yes (above), identify some of (he possible objectives			Increase economic liberali/ation. increase trade	
				and investment. promoting free market economy and favourable Investment opportunities for Their multinational co-Operations	
9.	I lave the foreign donors achieve their goals so far?	1	4		
10.	Have the foreign donors achieved some significant success?	2	3		
11.	Arc the objctive(s) of foreign donors a redaction of Nigeria's effort towards democratic Consolidation	1	4		
12.	I lave the foreign donors met challenges	4	1		
	If yes. (above) what are the challenges?				Insecurity, lack of viable opposition parties, laek internal democracy within the political parlies'
13.	Is the amount provided for technical support of electoral .conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies good enough to improve the electoral process in Nigeria?	4	1		
15.	Do you think the results of past elections in	5	0		

Source: Field survey 2025

In this category (C Academicians), the Respondents just like their other counterparts above suggested that the foreign donors have achieved some level of success in their electoral donor support but have not been able to achieve their objective because of some problems with the Nigerian political system such as: insecurity, lack of viable opposition parties, lack internal democracy within the political parties and so on.

In the last category (E Focus Group Discussion), their views were summarised and presented below on the successes and challenges of the international donor in electoral support in Nigeria.

Table 11: Responses of Respondents in Category E (Focus Group Discussion) on the Activities, lessons, level of assistance so far, objectives of foreign democratic assistance and Nigerian democratic effort.

S/No	Successes	Challenges	Objectives of FDA
1.	Training of electoral officers and election observations	Over reliance on electoral support	favourable investment opportunities for their multinational co-operations
2.	Finding of groups and watch dogs for four elections		
o J.	Supporting INEC with equipment and skills	Connecting with grassroot level and comparative civil society	
4.	Training of political parties and politicians	Achieving a balance between providing support and avoiding dominance	
5.	Providing vital information for INEC, groups and voters		

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 12: Rating of FDA Level in Nigeria

Responses of Respondents in all categories on the level of foreign democratic assistance in Nigeria

Respondents	Responses			
	Very high	High	Very low	Low
Donor Agencies	4	2	-	-
Civil liberty organization	-	3	2	
Independent National Electoral Commission	-	3	1	1
Political Party Leaders	6	2	1	1
Electorate/Academician	3	1	-	1
Focus Group Discussion	2	1	1	1
Total	15	12	5	4

Source: Field Survey 2025

5.2 Conclusion

The research underpinning this report had four key objectives: to identify the objective (s) of

foreign democratic assistance in Nigeria; to determine the level of foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria from 1999 to date and to find out the extent to which Nigeria's effort towards democratic consolidation is a reflection of the objective (s) of Foreign Democratic Assistance.

In this study however, we have tried to examine the objective (s) of foreign democratic assistance to Nigeria with its key issues and challenges it faces, as it affects the future development of democracy in Nigeria. Nigeria provides a unique opportunity to explore some assumptions and propositions on the values and benefits of democracy assistance, especially from the perspectives of its recipients because of the problems inherent in her practical political activity. In spite of the hundreds of billions of dollars translating into billions in Nigerian currency, received as foreign democratic assistance for the conduct of her elections since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999, her socio-economic and political development have remained gloomy.

Although, Bilateral and multilateral donors have made some important contributions towards the promotion and consolidation of neo-liberal democracy in Nigeria, (particularly in the area of funding, training, provision of technical skills and information to fNEC, civil societies and political parties and election monitoring) and they have also synergised their interventions in other sectors with their democracy assistance programmes to a certain degree, but their objective(s) has not been achieved because of some induced form of ineffective social and structural challenges with unintended consequences such as problems of poverty, accountability and sustainability, corruption and so on.

Despite the disappointment with Nigeria's democratic experiments, it is unlikely that donors will discontinue their support for the promotion of democracy and good governance. Interactions with the donor community in the country appeared to suggest that Nigeria will continue to benefit from international democracy assistance not because of its remarkable performance, but for other reasons including its strategic importance as a regional power and its economic importance to some of the bilateral donor countries, especially those from the West.

The Nigerian environment remains very challenging for democracy assistance:

First, Nigerian political environment remains deeply problematic and has grown largely unfavourable for democracy assistance, except for supporting civil society.

Second, the capacity of many local actors like CSOs and CBOs, the National Assembly, INEC, and the Judiciary are still inadequate.

Thirdly, the international promoters of democracy in Nigeria have clearly defined goals and objectives with their philanthropic and international assistance for democratic transition, but in a bid to promote democracy they are as well in the context of globalization promoting free market economy and favourable investment opportunities for their multinational corporations. This is why in spite of not achieving the desired results; donor agencies have found reasons to continue their interventions.

Fourthly, elections alone cannot resolve deeper political and social problems besetting states, hence international support to democratic transitions often falls short of achieving desired standard or structural transformation of the political process. Therefore, despite the donors' support for the Nigerian electoral system, Nigeria's effort such as introduction of the card reader machine for voters' accreditation, enlisting the support of civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure civic education and participatory electoral processes by Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), innovating to widen the process and ensure grassroots sensitisation by many CSOs and so on , towards democratic consolidation is still not a reflection of the objective (s) of Foreign Democratic Assistance. This is because, despite these efforts, our electoral integrity is still threatened by many factors such as voter apathy and lack of trust in the ability of electoral officials not to be biased, decline in citizen trust in Nigerian democratic institutions and processes, mainly due to reasons relating to poor and non-inclusive governance and electoral corruption and so on.

Fifthly, the amounts provided for technical support of electoral conduct and training of electoral body officials as well as support to civil societies were high but not very high as to improve the entire electoral process in Nigeria hence foster democratic good governance. However, it's level was good enough to make impact in those specific areas such as training and technical skills and

vital information offered to political parties and politicians, civil societies and so on. Sixthly, consolidating democracy, however, is still some time very far away, particularly in terms of regime responsiveness to citizens and political empowerment of the public, though a reflection of undemocratic electoral process which the donors are interested in consolidating so that the other aspects of democracy would also be consolidated. However, 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.

Despite these obstacles, Nigeria has enjoyed the good will of donors since its return to civilian rule in 1999. The country has received significant inflows of international democracy assistance for its political transition and its halting efforts toward democratic consolidation.

5.3 Recommendations

Having ensured systematic and logical explanation of the subject matter with the application of theory of change as a method for planning, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives we offer the following broad recommendations based on the findings of the study:

1. For democracy to be consolidated in the country there is need for change in the value orientation of the political elite. The ideological bases of our political parties that facilitate political vagrancy must be altered. Besides, for democracy and democratic consolidation to thrive in the country, the principles of democracy must not only be imbibed but must also be deepened.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Greater Harmonization and alignment in democratization assistance is desirable. There is a considerable need for donors to promote harmonization and alignment if democracy assistance is to become more effective. This remains a challenge, both within donors' individual programmes as well as collectively. Donor fragmentation and lack of alignment with country priorities tend to undermine already rather weak institutions, especially in hybrid regimes like Nigeria. This in turn has important implications for overall governance and state capacity, and ultimately for the effectiveness with which aid can be used in-country.
5. 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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