

# Elections' Monetization as the Fundamental Crossroad to Good Governance in Nigeria: A Case Study of Ekiti 2018 Gubernatorial Poll

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**Abstract:** - This paper examines the monetization of elections in Nigeria which has become undesirable omen to democratic consolidation in Africa especially Nigeria. Regrettably, indicators of good governance such as, service delivery, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, popular participation have always suffered due to electoral manipulations. Indeed, every Nigerian is imbibed with the culture of buying of votes. As a corollary, monetization of elections is nothing but a rape on democracy. It is noteworthy that once electioneering processes are politicized, the resultant effect would be non-performance of whoever emerges through the processes. Thus, it is not uncommon for masses to start scouting for money during elections since this has been the order of the day in Nigerian political system.

The work relies on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The data sources were complemented with the administration of questionnaires and oral interview with relevant stakeholders and members of the public to elicit more information about the effects of monetized election. The study raises fundamental question about the place of money in politics and its effect on future elections in Nigeria

**Keywords:** See and Buy In Vote-Selling, Electoral Fraud, Democracy, Popular participation and Bad Governance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### *Background to the study*

The culture of money politics and vote-buying has become recurring decimal in the world politics especially in Nigeria. It is regrettable to note that indicators of good governance such as, service delivery, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, popular participation have always suffered consequent upon such electoral manipulations.(Adigun, Larry and Ebere2004)In Ekiti 2018 gubernatorial poll, there were thirty-five (35) candidates in the election, representing different thirty-five(35) political parties. The roles played by those political parties before, during and after the poll cannot be over-emphasized as every party made spirited effort to ensure its victory at the poll.

Concerning the provision of security for the poll, there were more than enough security personnel on ground to ensure adequate security and safety of life and property before, during and after the elections, the IGP approved the

deployment of 30,000 police personnel to Ekiti State for the election. (The Punch,2018).The analysis is indicated thus: 30,000 operatives, two helicopters and 250 patrol vehicles, including five Armoured Personnel Carriers, for the poll (The Punch,2018) [punchng.com/ekiti-election-police-deploy-30000-personnel-two-choppers-others](http://punchng.com/ekiti-election-police-deploy-30000-personnel-two-choppers-others).According to the Force Public Relations Officer, acting DCP Jimoh Moshood, said in a statement in Abuja on Sunday that the security operation for the poll would be supervised by the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Operations, Joshiak Habila, who would be assisted by an Assistant Inspector-General of Police, four Commissioners of Police, eight Deputy Commissioners of Police and 18 Assistant Commissioners of Police. He explained that each Senatorial district would be manned by a Commissioner of Police. (The Punch,2018).The police added that threat assessment had been carried out in the state and all identified flashpoints and trouble-prone areas had been addressed, stressing that it would deal with anyone or group “no matter how highly placed whose utterances or conduct are contrary to the electoral Act or that could incite disturbance of public peace, law and order before, during or after the election.”(Akpeninor,2007).

In view of the above, it implies that enough security officers were provided to ensure peace throughout the state. However, opinions had it that there were open display of vote-buying which is likened to legalizing illegality that might have consequential impact on future elections and political development of the country if not properly contained (Akintide, 2018). This paper therefore examines how monetization of elections becomes an undesirable omen to democratic consolidation with a view to highlighting the implication for future elections in Nigeria and thereby providing panaceas capable of installing the integrity of government, political class, electoral body and the electorate through proper, free, fair, transparent and credible election. The study holds that politicization of election through monetization has become the ‘rule’ rather than exception in Africa particularly Nigeria and is largely due to corruption, greed, selfishness, self-centeredness etc on the part of the political elites(Awosanya,2012). The paper notes that this has unqualified deleterious consequences on the socio-economic and political life of the masses and their dependants, majority

of whom are pauper. The study notes that politicization and monetization of election have telling effects on governance as well as democratic consolidation thereby increases the incidences of vote-buying and election crisis in the country (Levy,2018). The study therefore concludes that for good governance, democratic consolidation to be effected, there must be periodic, reliable, and credible election devoid of questionable conduct. Indeed, while governments at all levels must be responsible and responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the people particularly in the area of free and fair elections, there must be concerted efforts on the part of political elites to be seen as truly representing the interest of the people by promoting ‘voting-accountability’, transparency and probity in governance. This will encourage all officials including the security apparatus to contribute their quotas in order to engender good governance, democratic consolidation and development. However, the issue of vote-buying and selling is as old as the country itself (Fabrice ,2003) It appears as if politics and money become inseparable due to the political culture we are accustomed to. The politics of vote-buying and selling therefore becomes an issue worthy of discourse in academic world. The impression is to vote and be paid for it / or see it and pay for the vote cast. It becomes a disturbing challenge in that how can somebody be paid for exercising his/her civic and constitutional rights? Desperation on the part of political gladiators do account for election frauds. For instance, the Ekiti 2018 gubernatorial poll showcases the attitude of desperate politicians who were out to win the election at all costs. In carrying out their desperations, virtually all the thirty-five(35) political parties did engage in vote-buying on the payment which ranged from #3,000:00--#5,000:00. In the same vein, virtually all the electorates did engage in selling their votes upon the collection of the said #3,000:00---#5,000:00. In this circumstance, Ekiti State might be referred to as Land of honour, Fountain of knowledge characterized with poverty. What is the way out? Shall the system continue in this manner?

This paper therefore examines the attitudinal behavior of the political gladiators in Nigeria and Ekiti State in particular with a view to providing practicable solutions in order to attain enduring political atmosphere in the country. At this juncture, the study attempts to answer the following research questions. What is “see and buy” in the electioneering process of Nigeria? How illegal is the political behavior of vote-buying and selling in Nigeria? What is the implication of election frauds on political development of Nigeria? What is the motive behind monetized elections in Nigeria? Meanwhile, the study is guided by the following objectives: to examine the concept of “see and buy” in the electioneering process of Nigeria; to assess the illegality of the political behavior of vote-buying and selling in Nigeria; to highlight the implication of election frauds on political development of Nigeria; and to educate the reading public about the motive behind monetized elections in Nigeria.

Like every study of this nature, the study is predicated on the following basic assumptions. That as long see and buy persists in the electioneering process of Nigeria, the integrity of elections will always be in doubt. That the illegality of vote-buying and selling is a direct stimuli of corruption in Nigeria. That election fraud is an affront to political development of Nigeria. That as long as monetized elections continue in Nigeria, the question of free, fair and credible election remains utopia.

#### *Theoretical Clarification*

**Systems theory** is the interdisciplinary study of systems. A system is a cohesive conglomeration of interrelated and interdependent parts that is either natural or man-made(Wikipedia). Every system is delineated by its spatial and temporal boundaries, surrounded and influenced by its environment, described by its structure and purpose or nature and expressed in its functioning. In terms of its effects, a system can be more than the sum of its parts if it expresses synergy or emergent behavior. Changing one part of the system usually affects other parts and the whole system, with predictable patterns of behavior. For systems that are self-learning and self-adapting, the positive growth and adaptation depend upon how well the system is adjusted with its environment. Some systems function mainly to support other systems by aiding in the maintenance of the other system to prevent failure. The goal of systems theory is systematically discovering a system's dynamics, constraints, conditions and elucidating principles (purpose, measure, methods, tools, etc.) that can be discerned and applied to systems at every level of nesting, and in every field for achieving optimized equifinality.(Wikipedia)

*General systems theory is about broadly applicable concepts and principles, as opposed to concepts and principles applicable to one domain of knowledge. It distinguishes dynamic or active systems from static or passive systems. Active systems are activity structures or components that interact in behaviours and processes. Passive systems are structures and components that are being processed. Applying this theory to the study, since a system can be more than the sum of its parts if it expresses synergy or emergent behavior therefore whatever affects its parts invariably affects its whole. Indeed, monetization of elections produces poor/bad governance which in turn has telling consequences on other aspects of society.*

## II. CONTENDING ISSUES IN VOTE-BUYING AND SELLING CHARACTERIZED WITH “SEE AND BUY” IN EKITI 2018 POLLS

There are usually contending issues surrounding the selling and buying of votes globally. However, Ekiti’s case remained exceptionally worse one because of the desperation on the part of political gladiators occasioned by the desire to win election at whatever cost. It should be mentioned that various factors

among others manifested as contending issues such as: non-payment of salaries and its effect; high level of poverty; lack of political education; culture of corruption; greediness; covetousness on the of the electorates; collaboration on the part of security apparatus; the involvement of major political parties in sharing and distributing money to the electorates and so on. (PeterboroughCityCouncil, 2018)

There were challenges in the election that appeared as contending issues. For instance an electorate had this to say “at Temidire polling unit which is not far from where I cast my vote, there was an issue of attempted ballot snatching. A winner truly emerged based on the number of valid votes cast and counted”. <http://punchng.com/vital-takeaways-from-the-ekiti-election/>

Another contending issue is that not all eligible electorates in Ekiti participated directly in the electoral process that gave rise to the emergence of the current governor-elect. Truly, not everyone who had the PVC voted. The total number of votes cast, 403,451 is quite far below the total number of registered voters, 909, 585. <http://punchng.com/vital-takeaways-from-the-ekiti-election/>. Nevertheless, it would amount to a lack of understanding to submit that those who participated in the election do not represent the majority or entirety of the state. Thus, a greater majority certainly had a firsthand apprehension of what transpired on the day of the election. In other words, “we, Ekiti, came, we saw and we know what happened. The Federal Government has a clear mandate to fight corruption. Ekiti, by the result of this election, is fully aligned with the government at the centre and therefore would never be in the dark as to what it meant to fight corruption”. <http://punchng.com/vital-takeaways-from-the-ekiti-election/> No single Ekiti electorate shall henceforth claim ignorance of what corruption or the fight against it meant. (The Punch, 2018).

At Ikere, where one of the major contenders hails from, the price for a print of the thumb was as high as N20,000 in some highly competitive quarters. At Ado, it was less and in the neighbourhood of N10,000 and N12,000. Where I voted, an idyllic suburb of Ikole metropolis with a substantial presence of a settler farming clan from Kogi State, the rate was a flat N5,000. (The Punch, 2018). You thumbprint and you are paid without bargains! And trust the peasant farmers, the five thousand grand from the highest bidder was more attractive than the contending party’s proposal of “thumbprint and be promised N3,000 after the election”. (The Punch, 2018).

In furtherance, a contending issue is that of the manner and mode adopted in the payment of cash to the electorates. On the day preceding the election day, some electorates had their bank accounts deposited with prescribed amount of money. According to the governorship candidate of the Accord Party, Mr Abiodun Aluko: “*What we are doing is not election. It is money competition. The PDP started it by paying N3,000 into the accounts of civil servants and pensioners. I am a pensioner and I received an alert of N3,000 to vote for the*

*PDP. I called the pension office to ask if my pension was now N3,000. They told me that it was meant for logistics to and fro, that we would meet on the field for the balance.*” [punchng.com/i-was-paid-n3000-to-vote-for-pdp-ap-candidate/](http://punchng.com/i-was-paid-n3000-to-vote-for-pdp-ap-candidate/)

He also opined that the Ekiti State Government was culpable of vote-buying for the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, Prof. Kolapo Olusola. While the members of All Progressives Congress according to him were openly distributing N5,000 cash to voters to influence them to vote for former Governor Kayode Fayemi, who was the candidate of the party. “The APC is openly distributing N5,000 per vote while the PDP is distributing N4,000 per vote. All okada unions have been given millions of naira to buy the votes of their members. On the surface, you will observe that there is no fighting but the absence of violence does not mean that there is peace and security agents turned blind eyes to the distribution of money which was done openly. This is so because there is so much poverty in the land and many believe that today is the only day they can get something from the government that has not done anything for them”. [punchng.com/i-was-paid-n3000-to-vote-for-pdp-ap-candidate/](http://punchng.com/i-was-paid-n3000-to-vote-for-pdp-ap-candidate/)

However, by far, the biggest dent or minus that blighted the many success stories of the Saturday election was the prevalence of vote-buying which was ingeniously nicknamed, ‘See and buy’. This newspaper in its Sunday, July 15 edition reported a voter who alleged that the All Progressives Congress agent offered him a bribe of N5,000 to vote for the party. The man who spoke on condition of anonymity was quoted as saying: “I was offered N5,000 to vote for the party but I rejected it. I am a 73-year-old retired teacher. I cannot allow the future of my children to be bought by moneybags. I don’t know how we descended to this level where people brazenly offer money to people to secure their votes. It was not like this in the past. Will our votes count with this problem?” <http://punchng.com/ekiti-see-and-buy-election-bazaar>

Apart from many other observer teams confirming widespread cases of vote-buying during our meeting at the CSO Situation Room meeting held on Saturday night, I personally witnessed the ugly phenomenon at Polling Unit 008 A Sawmill, Ifaki Ekiti in Ido-Osi Local Government Area. <http://punchng.com/ekiti-see-and-buy-election-bazaar>. This heart-rending phenomenon has become a recurring decimal in our polity with allegations of widespread vote-buying reported in all the elections held in this Fourth Republic, since 1999. It will be recalled that there were similar reports of vote-buying under the euphemism of ‘Stomach Infrastructure’ in the same Ekiti State in 2014 as well as the more recent Ondo and Anambra elections. <http://punchng.com/ekiti-see-and-buy-election-bazaar> British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Paul Arkwright condemned vote-buying, which was rampant in the election. He said, “I was there in Ekiti to monitor elections and I heard a lot of reports of alleged vote buying

and we are convinced that some vote buying went on. I condemn it. Vote buying is illegal; it is against the law, it is just as vote rigging, it is just as bad as ballot stuffing.<http://punchng.com/ekiti-election-vote-buying-as-bad-as-rigging-says-uk/>“We cannot make a distinction when all these activities are illegal so I condemn that. What are we going to do about it? Well we just had a meeting with the chairman of INEC, we have been talking about public awareness and how the political parties themselves can take responsibility for condemning this action and not continuing it”<http://punchng.com/ekiti-election-vote-buying-as-bad-as-rigging-says-uk/>

On the issue of vote buying, Agbamuche-Mbu who said she was disturbed about it, however said that the politicians in Ekiti developed several clever means to buy votes in last Saturday’s governorship elections. She said the commission is taking the issue of vote buying very serious. According to her, the electoral body was already looking at ways to curbing vote buying during elections. She, however stressed that adequate enlightenment and education of the electorate should be carried out to make them understand the need to make their vote counts and not about money. Speaking ahead of the Osun governorship polls, she said it would be smooth because ‘Osun electorate are more sophisticated. According to her, “INEC is taking issue of vote buying very seriously. I am just coming as part of the Supervising National Commissioner for Ekiti and these things occur. “We are having another conference on electoral offences. Vote buying is another electoral offence and we are looking at ways to curb it. Politicians keep trying their best. “Politicians were clever in Ekiti. They have ingenious ways to sort themselves out. We will go back and review it and see how we can stop vote buying with the best of our ability. “Security agencies were not involved in votes buying in the two local governments I supervised. “We have to continue to enlighten and educate our electorate. We have to educate our people for them to realize that their votes count and not all about money.” (The Vanguard,2018).

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/07/inec-commends-security-agencies-on-ekiti-governorship-election/>

Another contending issue was the criticism that attended the release of the election results. While some held that there were manipulations in the results, some disagreed. For instance, according to the Director of Media and Publicity of Kolapo Olusola Campaign Organization , Lere Olayinka:“The process was structured in a way that voting should not have taken place in the first place. It was structured in a way that only APC supporters should vote. That is why people identified as members of the opposition were sent away from polling units. They went as far as arresting PDP supporters. Thugs were operating and moving round under the cover of policemen. In other climes, when thugs want to operate, they are wary of security agencies. But here, they worked together scattering where they suspected that APC was losing; destroying votes in the full glare of security men . A South - West governor

had once boasted and assured them not to worry because the APC would snatch Ekiti. It means that the votes were not meant to count from the outset and on Saturday the votes did not count. The will of the people did not prevail. That is why even those who secured the victory could not celebrate”.[Punchng.com/inec-colluded-with-security-operatives-to-rig-ekiti-election-govs-aidee/](http://punchng.com/inec-colluded-with-security-operatives-to-rig-ekiti-election-govs-aidee/)

It is interesting to note that issue of the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission shutting down the *Ekiti State Broadcasting Corporation* because Governor Ayodele Fayose went on air to declare the PDP candidate as the winner of the governorship election that was held in the state while the INEC was still collating results of the election, awaiting electronic computation from the 16 council areas in the state to the INEC headquarters when the NBC ordered the closure.The INEC headquarters was condoned off as results were being awaited.

**According to Olufemi Atoyebi, a reporter:** “However, no winner had emerged as of the time the governor reportedly made the announcement, and the broadcasting regulatory agency gave the order”. (The Punch,2018).Worthy of discourse is issue of Unpaid salaries by Governor Ayodele Fayose’s administration believed to have been responsible for Fayemi’s victory. According to the NLC President , Ayuba Wabba; “We are confident that one of your first executive actions upon your inauguration would be to clear the backlog of salaries and pension owed Ekiti workers .The congress President said the people would hold the new governor to his promises” (The PUNCH,2018). [Punchng.com/unpaid-salaries-responsible-for-fayemi-victory-says-nlc](http://punchng.com/unpaid-salaries-responsible-for-fayemi-victory-says-nlc)

### III. IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

At this juncture, it must be stressed that the conduct of Ekiti 2018 poll has some implications for future of this country and every Ekiti electorate needs not be told what “fighting corruption” means because they are firsthand witnesses to the process which would usher in the man who would have the programme domiciled in their state. It is a win-win situation for the people and the elected individual. The elected won his mandate but the people are never the losers, after all, every voter got richer by N5,000 or N20,000 distributed during the poll. Now that it is possible to transfer or switch voting points, with adequate permutations, a shrewd electorate should hazard a guess as to how best to make more money through their choice of voting points. Conversely, the nation is the loser. The nation Nigeria is the loser because her leadership has once again failed her. The nation has been failed because her leadership has chosen rather to perpetuate the practice of perfidy in relation to elections (Ozoemenam and Chukwudi ,2009).This failure would, no doubt, affect all other facets of the socio-economic life of the people and the future elections in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, while Sections 124 and 130 of the Electoral Act 2010, as amended criminalize voter inducement, bribery or vote-buying with penalty ranging from N100,000 and

N500,000 fine or 12 months imprisonment, no one, to the best of my knowledge, has been prosecuted for this electoral crime. While the police claimed to have effected some arrests in Ekiti, it remains to be seen if these new catch will have their day in court and get the maximum punishment. Many analysts have wrongfully accused INEC of failure to act on this issue but beyond the power to monitor party finances and campaign funds, the commission lacks the statutory power to arrest and investigate; it only has power to prosecute. For me, the way out of this menace is voter education and enforcement of the extant legal provisions against vote-buying(Akinbosade,2007). This is the more reason the National Assembly needs to expedite action on the Electoral Offences Commission Bill before it so that it can come into force before the 2019 general elections. This election bazaar must stop!

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is high we tackled some of the challenges arising from election manipulation before 2019 general elections. However, INEC may not be able to solve all the electoral problems on its own. Everyone in society has a role to play and a contribution to make. Every civil society must contribute its quota towards making the general elections free, fair and credible. Political parties must respect a code of conduct adhering to the highest standards. (Dipoand Mimiko,2002) They must also engage in mass political education/awareness of their party members We must encourage security agencies to remain visibly neutral and ensure a safe and secure environment for the electorate.

EKITI 2018 ELECTION RESULTS AT A GLANCE

 <b>#EkitiDecides2018</b> <b>July 14th Gubernatorial Election Results</b> 						Celicitnews.com					
S/N	Candidate	Party	Votes	vote %	Position	S/N	Candidate	Party	Votes	vote %	Position
1	Kayode Fayemi	APC	197,459	51.34%	1st	19	Tunde Afe	ANRP	125	0.03%	19th
2	Kolapo Olusola	PDP	178,121	46.31%	2nd	20	Lucas Orubuloye	AGA	107	0.03%	20th
3	Dada Ayoyinka	PDC	1,242	0.32%	3rd	21	Babatunde Adegbeleye	NDLP	84	0.02%	21st
4	Saheed Jimoh	APA	1,199	0.31%	4th	22		PANDEL	74	0.02%	22nd
5	Bode Olowoporoku	ACD	1,149	0.30%	5th	23	Ayodeji Ayodele	APGA	70	0.02%	23rd
6	Segun Adewale	ADP	1,082	0.28%	6th	24	Omotayo Gabriel	YPP	49	0.01%	24th
7	Goke Animashaun	PPA	632	0.16%	7th	25	Sule Ganiyu	FJP	42	0.01%	25th
8	Tope Adebayo	APDA	464	0.12%	8th	26	Shola Omolola	AA	41	0.01%	26th
9	Akinloye Aiyegbusi	SDP	367	0.10%	9th	27	Olubode Jegede	MMN	35	0.01%	27th
10	Oladosu Olaniyan	NPC	353	0.09%	10th	28	Jacob Gboyega	UPN	33	0.01%	28th
11	Sikiru Lawal	LP	280	0.07%	11th	29	Stephen Oribamise	AGAP	31	0.01%	29th
12	Abiodun Ahuko	A	250	0.07%	12th	30	Fakorede Ayodeji	YDP	31	0.01%	29th
13	Adebisi Omoyeni	MPN	231	0.06%	13th	31	Husegun Adeleye	UDP	29	0.01%	30th
14	Agboola Olaniyi	AD	216	0.06%	14th	32	Temitope Amuda	KOWA	23	0.01%	31st
15	Tosin Ajibare	ID	212	0.06%	15th	33	Adewale Olusola	GPN	20	0.01%	32nd
16	Dare Bajide	PPN	187	0.05%	16th	34	Adegboye Ajayi	BNPP	14	0.00%	33rd
17	Yinka Akerele	DPP	181	0.05%	17th	35	David Adesua	DA	14	0.00%	33rd
18	Olekan Olarenwaju	DPC	147	0.04%	18th						
<b>Canceled Votes</b>			<b>2,410</b>			<b>Total Valid Votes</b>			<b>384,594</b>		
			<b>Total Votes Cast</b>			<b>Total Invalid votes</b>			<b>18,857</b>		
			<b>Total Accredited</b>						<b>405,861</b>		

Source: STATE INEC OFFICE, ADO-EKITI, EKITI STATE

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